

REPRESENTATIVE CLASSICAL ESSAYS



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TORONTO

REPRESENTATIVE CLASSICAL ESSAYS

FOR INTERMEDIATE CLASSES

WITH BRIEF LITERARY INTRODUCTION AND
EXPLANATORY NOTES

SELECTED BY

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PREFACE

EXPERIENCE is showing more and more clearly that, in the interests of English education in India, a more definite distinction than has yet been made needs to be drawn between the mastering of English as a *language* and the study of it as a *literature*. The average Intermediate student is still mainly concerned with the former task, but at the same time it is generally thought desirable, as a secondary aim, to prepare him for the latter by an early introduction to some of the great classical English writers. The Essay provides the best material for doing this, but unfortunately in most of the Selections available, the pieces chosen, however suitable from a literary or historical point of view, are either too difficult in style and diction for the Intermediate student, or so full of topical or critical subject-matter as to distract him unduly from what must still remain his primary business, the learning of the language. Nevertheless, if the desirability of classical English for the Intermediate student be admitted, it should be possible, within certain limits, to choose a series of Essays which should not be too difficult for his understanding at that stage, and yet fairly representative of the classics of the literature.

Such a double aim has been attempted in the present Selection, as the title indicates. The range of authors drawn on has been necessarily restricted. The avoidance of archaic diction has made Steele and Addison a natural beginning; and the middle of the nineteenth century has been taken, perhaps rather arbitrarily, as a limit to "classical" fame! But within those limits practically all the great essayists have been represented, and the few omissions are due to a predominantly topical or critical style that would be unsuitable for Intermediate students. Under the same restrictions, pieces have been chosen that are as far as possible typical of the individual authors or, in some cases, of their creations. The exclusion of Ned Softly, Dick Minim, Beau Tibbs, Sarah Battle, and other old friends is a regrettable necessity; but perhaps they will be all the more appreciated when met with in the B.A. course. The Notes have been kept as brief as possible, but with their assistance and a proper use of the dictionary these essays should be intelligible to the average Second Year student, and at the same time it is hoped that his literary taste may be awakened by this unforced introduction to some of the greatest English writers of the past.

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INTRODUCTION

THE writers represented in this Selection are the leading names among the authors who devoted themselves to essay-writing as a form of literature in the eighteenth and first half of the nineteenth centuries, the period during which English prose attained its mature form. There are, of course, within this period other essayists whose fame in English literature is as great, but their essays for the most part are more technical or deal with topical subjects. Their writings are therefore less suited for a general introduction to the greater achievements of the English language, such as this Selection is intended to give.

The literary essay has been defined as "a short discursive article on any literary, philosophical, or social subject, viewed from a personal or an historical standpoint." It will be seen, however, from the specimens here given that the definition is by no means exhaustive; some of the writers have not hesitated to put their essays into the form of anecdotes or sketches. In fact, the idea of the modern novel first took shape from the disjointed series of character sketches published by Steele and Addison.

The two writers just named are of the greatest historical importance in the development of English literary expression. They both lived at a time when every form of literature made clearness of thought and conciseness of expression its particular aim. But Steele and Addison were also influenced by two even more practical ideas: they wished in the first place to provide their contemporaries with the news of the day, and, in the second place, to exercise by means of their paper a good influence on social tastes and public morals.

With these objects in view SIR RICHARD STEELE (1672-1729) began in 1709 to issue *The Tatler*. This periodical contained items of news, but the most interesting feature of each number was an article indirectly commenting on or criticising some matter of current general interest or importance. To give continuity to these articles and make them more attractive, Steele attributed them all to an imaginary person, Mr. Isaac Bickerstaff. That gentleman, whose name is an important one in English fiction, introduces himself in the first essay of this Selection.

JOSEPH ADDISON (1672-1719), a friend of Steele, warmly assisted him in his project, and contributed a fair number of articles to *The Tatler*. He too wrote in the character of Mr. Bickerstaff.

By 1711 *The Tatler* was found to be losing its hold on the public. Its character had gradually altered: the news element had steadily diminished as interest in the literary part developed. Accordingly in this year the two authors abandoned the old name, and introduced a new periodical, *The Spectator*,

which ran for nearly two years and was devoted almost entirely to the essay. The joint authorship continued, still anonymous; but the fictitious writer of the articles was now given the name of Mr. Spectator. In that capacity Steele and Addison, in the third and fifth essays of the Selection, give us their ideas of the purpose of the paper.

The seventh and eighth essays introduce us, rather briefly but perhaps sufficiently for appreciation, to another very famous figure in English fiction, Sir Roger de Coverley. A large number of the *Spectator* essays were concerned with the doings of this attractive old character, and were intended to pillory by implication many of the faults and follies of the age. The sort of life that occupied the cultured classes of the time in London is indicated by Essays IV and VI, while a glimpse of country life is given by the two essays about Sir Roger.

These two great writers overshadowed all their contemporaries and immediate successors for a generation. Then SAMUEL JOHNSON (1709-1784)—the famous Dr. Johnson who compiled the first English Dictionary and wrote the *Lives of the Poets*, and other works, but is still more famous for his conversations as recorded by his satellite, Boswell—revived the idea of the periodical essay, and produced *The Rambler* in 1750 and *The Idler* nine or ten years later. The titles, like that of *The Spectator*, indicate the character of the supposed writer in each case, but, as the specimens will show, Dr. Johnson was far more consciously concerned than Steele, and

Addison with improving and instructing his readers, and his writing was less light and amusing than theirs. For that very reason it was far less effective.

His contemporary, however, OLIVER GOLDSMITH (1728-1774), did not suffer from such ponderousness, and though his fame rests mainly on two great poems, *The Traveller* and *The Deserted Village*, and on the well-known novel, *The Vicar of Wakefield*, his essays contribute not a little both to his reputation and to the capacities of the English language. The form he selected for his essays was a slightly new one: they purported to be letters written by a Chinaman who was visiting England. At the present day such essays would appear in a Magazine or Review; but periodicals of these types had hardly appeared in Goldsmith's time, and his essays, like those of his predecessors, were issued separately. The series was entitled *The Citizen of the World*: and in the character of The Citizen Goldsmith was able to bring a detached and impartial criticism to bear on the affairs and foibles of his country—or rather, of his adopted country, for he was by birth an Irishman. The value of this detached attitude can be judged from some of the essays that here represent him, while others will indicate the remarkable sweetness and sentiment of his character. The Man in Black, one of the Chinaman's closest friends, was of course Goldsmith himself.

The effect of two such outstanding writers was once more to paralyse for a time the output of the English language in this particular form, the Essay. However, at the opening of the nineteenth century,

a time of great intellectual and literary development, this type of writing received a great impulse from the growth of literary criticism. One of the most important and voluminous writers of such criticism was WILLIAM HAZLITT (1778-1830), a personal friend, though a very quarrelsome one, of Wordsworth, Coleridge and most of the other great authors of the period. His critical work is too technical to be represented here, but he also wrote essays of a more general character, portions of which are included in this Selection. They will show how ably he could wield the English language, whatever his subject might be.

CHARLES LAMB (1775-1834), though a contemporary of Hazlitt, is a very different type of writer. He treated the Essay in the sense in which Dr. Johnson defines it, as "a loose sally of the mind"; and the mind that made, in *The London Magazine* of about 1820, the periodical sallies that were later collected under the title of *The Essays of Elia*, was unique in literature, as some of the specimens here given will indicate. The very charm, however, of Lamb's work consists in qualities such as allusiveness, elliptical expression, and similar neglect of strict composition which make many of his most typical pieces hardly suitable for illustrating standards of English writing. But those pieces which have been chosen to represent him will illustrate at least that wonderful combination of playfulness and earnestness with which this devotedly unselfish City-clerk looked out upon a world that was none too kind to him.

LEIGH HUNT (1784-1859) was a slightly junior contemporary of the two preceding authors, and like both of them has a considerable name as a literary critic. But he developed chiefly that combination of journalism and essay-writing which is more familiar at the present day than it was then, and contributed his writings to several magazines either conducted or largely supported by himself. The wide range of the subjects he was prepared to discuss, and his capacity for telling a story well, are indicated by the three selections given.

WASHINGTON IRVING (1783-1859) was an American writer of the same period as Hazlitt, Lamb and Leigh Hunt. He was practically the "Father of American Literature," as Essay No. XXIX will suggest, and is important in the history of English literature for having linked to its traditions the newly formed American nation which had inherited the same great mother-tongue. His work was greatly influenced by that of Goldsmith, of whom he wrote a Life. He also produced a considerable amount of historical work, but is best known probably for his famous story of *Rip van Winkle*, which appears in his collection of essays entitled *The Sketch Book*.

This brief survey of the historical setting and literary work of the Essayists here represented must not be misunderstood. It touches only one small aspect of English literature during the period covered, and within those limits it confines itself to a very small number of writers and to very restricted types of their work. But the selections are intended to show the resources of the English language, and

capacities of the individual authors. It is hoped that students may be stimulated by a not too laborious introduction to these essayists, and may be tempted to make a fuller acquaintance with them, regarding them no longer as total strangers known at the most by name, nor as enemies to be encountered in deadly conflict at examination times, but recognizing them as great writers in a great literature.

SIR RICHARD STEELE

I. MR. BICKERSTAFF ON HIMSELF

(From *The Tatler*)

No. 89.] Thursday, November 3, 1709.

Rura mihi placeant, riguique in vallibus amnes,
Flumina amem sylvasque inglorius——

Virg. *Georg.* ii. 485.

My next desire is, void of care and strife,
To lead a soft, secure, inglorious life ;
A country cottage near a crystal flood,
A winding valley, and a lofty wood.—Dryden.

Grecian Coffee-house, November 2.

I HAVE received this short epistle from an unknown hand.

“ SIR,

“ I have no more to trouble you with than to desire you would in your next help me to some answer to the inclosed concerning yourself. In the mean time I congratulate you upon the increase of your fame, which you see has extended itself beyond the bills of mortality.”

“ SIR,

“ That the country is barren of news has been the excuse, time out of mind, for dropping a

correspondence with our friends in London ; as if it were impossible out of a coffee-house to write an agreeable letter. I am too ingenuous to endeavour at the covering of my negligence with so common an excuse. Doubtless, amongst friends, bred, as we have been, to the better knowledge of books as well as men, a letter dated from a garden, a grotto, a fountain, a wood, a meadow, or the banks of a river, may be more entertaining than one from Tom's, Will's, White's, or St. James's. I promise, therefore, to be frequent for the future in my rural dates to you. But for fear you should, from what I have said, be induced to believe I shun the commerce of men, I must inform you, that there is a fresh topic of discourse lately arisen amongst the ingenious in our part of the world, and is become the more fashionable for the ladies giving in to it. This we owe to Isaac Bickerstaff, who is very much censured by some, and as much justified by others. Some criticise his style, his humour, and his matter ; others admire the whole man. Some pretend, from the informations of their friends in town, to decypher the author ; and others confess they are lost in their guesses. For my part, I must own myself a professed admirer of the paper, and desire you to send me a complete set, together with your thoughts of the squire and his lucubrations."

There is no pleasure like that of receiving praise from the praiseworthy ; and I own it a very solid happiness, that these my lucubrations are approved by a person of so fine a taste as the author of this

letter, who is capable of enjoying the world in the simplicity of its natural beauties. This pastoral letter, if I may so call it, must be written by a man who carries his entertainment wherever he goes, and is undoubtedly one of those happy men who appear far otherwise to the vulgar. I dare say, he is not envied by the vicious, the vain, the frolic, and the loud; but is continually blessed with that strong and serious delight, which flows from a well-taught and liberal mind. With great respect to country sports, I may say, this gentleman could pass his time agreeably, if there were not a hare or a fox in his county. That calm and elegant satisfaction which the vulgar call melancholy is the true and proper delight of men of knowledge and virtue. What we take for diversion, which is a kind of forgetting ourselves, is but a mean way of entertainment, in comparison of that which is considering, knowing, and enjoying ourselves. The pleasures of ordinary people are in their passions; but the seat of this delight is in the reason and understanding. Such a frame of mind raises that sweet enthusiasm, which warms the imagination at the sight of every work of nature, and turns all round you into a picture and landscape. I shall be ever proud of advices from this gentleman; for I profess writing news from the learned, as well as the busy world.

As for my labours, which he is pleased to inquire after, if they can but wear one impertinence out of human life, destroy a single vice, or give a morning's cheerfulness to an honest mind; in short, if the world can be but one virtue the better, or in any degree

less vicious, or receive from them the smallest addition to their innocent diversions; I shall not think my pains, or indeed my life, to have been spent in vain.

Thus far as to my studies. It will be expected I should in the next place give some account of my life. I shall therefore, for the satisfaction of the present age, and the benefit of posterity, present the world with the following abridgement of it.

It is remarkable, that I was bred by hand, and ate nothing but milk until I was a twelvemonth old; from which time, to the eighth year of my age, I was observed to delight in pudding and potatoes, and indeed I retain a benevolence for that sort of food to this day. I do not remember that I distinguished myself in anything at those years, but by my great skill at law, for which I was so barbarously used, that it has ever since given me an aversion to gaming. In my twelfth year, I suffered very much for two or three false concords. At fifteen I was sent to the University, and staid there for some time; but a drum passing by, being a lover of music, I enlisted myself for a soldier. As years came on, I began to examine things, and grew discontented at the times. This made me quit the sword, and take to the study of the occult sciences, in which I was so wrapped up, that Oliver Cromwell had been buried, and taken up again, five years before I heard he was dead. This gave me first the reputation of a conjurer, which has been of great disadvantage to me ever since, and kept me out of all public employments. The greater part of my later years.

has been divided between Dick's coffee-house, the Trumpet in Sheer-lane, and my own lodgings.

II. ON THE DEATH OF FRIENDS

(From *The Tatler*)

No. 181.]

June 6, 1710.

Dies, ni fallor, adest, quem semper acerbum,
Semper honoratum, sic dii voluistis, habebo.

Virg. *Æn.* v. 49.

And now the rising day renews the year,
A day for ever sad, for ever dear.—Dryden.

From my own Apartment, June 5.

THERE are those among mankind, who can enjoy no relish of their being, except the world is made acquainted with all that relates to them, and think every thing lost that passes unobserved; but others find a solid delight in stealing by the crowd, and modelling their life after such a manner, as is as much above the approbation as the practice of the vulgar. Life being too short to give instances great enough of true friendship or good will, some sages have thought it pious to preserve a certain reverence for the *manes* of their deceased friends; and have withdrawn themselves from the rest of the world at certain seasons, to commemorate in their own thoughts such of their acquaintance who have gone before them out of this life. And indeed, when we are advanced in years, there is not a more pleasing entertainment, than to recollect in a gloomy moment the many we have parted with, that have been dear

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and agreeable to us, and to cast a melancholy thought or two after those, with whom, perhaps, we have indulged ourselves in whole nights of mirth and jollity. With such inclinations in my heart I went to my closet yesterday in the evening, and resolved to be sorrowful; upon which occasion I could not but look with disdain upon myself, that though all the reasons which I had to lament the loss of many of my friends are now as forcible as at the moment of their departure, yet did not my heart swell with the same sorrow which I felt at the time; but I could, without tears, reflect upon many pleasing adventures I have had with some, who have long been blended with common earth. Though it is by the benefit of nature, that length of time thus blots out the violence of afflictions; yet, with tempers too much given to pleasure, it is almost necessary to revive the old places of grief in our memory; and ponder step by step on past life, to lead the mind into that sobriety of thought which poises the heart, and makes it beat with due time, without being quickened with desire, or retarded with despair, from its proper and equal motion. When we wind up a clock that is out of order, to make it go well for the future, we do not immediately set the hand to the present instant, but we make it strike the round of all its hours, before it can recover the regularity of its time. Such, thought I, shall be my method this evening; and since it is that day of the year which I dedicate to the memory of such in another life as I much delighted in when living, an hour or two shall be sacred to sorrow and their memory.

while I run over all the melancholy circumstances of this kind which have occurred to me in my whole life.

The first sense of sorrow I ever knew was upon the death of my father, at which time I was not quite five years of age; but was rather amazed at what all the house meant, than possessed with a real understanding why nobody was willing to play with me. I remember I went into the room where his body lay, and my mother sat weeping alone by it. I had my battledore in my hand, and fell a beating the coffin, and calling Papa; for, I know not how, I had some slight idea that he was locked up there. My mother caught me in her arms, and, transported beyond all patience of the silent grief she was before in, she almost smothered me in her embraces; and told me in a flood of tears, "Papa could not hear me, and would play with me no more, for they were going to put him under ground, whence he could never come to us again." She was a very beautiful woman, of a noble spirit, and there was a dignity in her grief amidst all the wildness of her transport; which, methought, struck me with an instinct of sorrow, that, before I was sensible of what it was to grieve, seized my very soul, and has made pity the weakness of my heart ever since. The mind in infancy is, methinks, like the body in embryo; and receives impressions so forcible, that they are as hard to be removed by reason, as any mark with which a child is born is to be taken away by any future application. Hence it is that good-nature in me is no merit; but having been so frequently over-

whelmed with her tears before I knew the cause of any affliction, or could draw defences from my own judgment, I imbibed commiseration, remorse, and an unmanly gentleness of mind, which has since insnared me into ten thousand calamities; and from whence I can reap no advantage, except it be, that, in such a humour as I am now in, I can the better indulge myself in the softness of humanity, and enjoy that sweet anxiety which arises from the memory of past afflictions.

We, that are very old, are better able to remember things which befell us in our distant youth, than the passages of later days. For this reason it is, that the companions of my strong and vigorous years present themselves more immediately to me in this office of sorrow. Untimely and unhappy deaths are what we are most apt to lament; so little are we able to make it indifferent when a thing happens, though we know it must happen. Thus we groan under life, and bewail those who are relieved from it. Every object that returns to our imagination raises different passions, according to the circumstances of their departure. Who can have lived in an army, and in a serious hour reflect upon the many gay and agreeable men that might long have flourished in the arts of peace, and not join with the imprecations of the fatherless and widow on the tyrant to whose ambition they fell sacrifices? But gallant men, who are cut off by the sword, move rather our veneration than our pity; and we gather relief enough from their own contempt of death, to make that no evil, which was approached

with so much cheerfulness, and attended with so much honour. But when we turn our thoughts from the great parts of life on such occasions, and instead of lamenting those who stood ready to give death to those from whom they had the fortune to receive it ; I say, when we let our thoughts wander from such noble objects, and consider the havock which is made among the tender and the innocent, pity enters with an unmixed softness, and possesses all our souls at once

III. MR. SPECTATOR ON HIMSELF

(From *The Spectator*)

No. 4.] Monday, March 5, 1711.

Egredi mortalem atque silentii ?—Hor. 2 *Sat.* vi. 58.

One of uncommon silence and reserve.

AN author when he first appears in the world, is very apt to believe it has nothing to think of but his performances. With a good share of this vanity in my heart, I made it my business these three days to listen after my own fame ; and as I have sometimes met with circumstances which did not displease me, I have been encountered by others which gave me much mortification. It is incredible to think how empty I have in this time observed some part of the species to be, what mere blanks they are when they first come abroad in the morning, how utterly they are at a stand until they are set a-going by some paragraph in a newspaper.

Such persons are very acceptable to a young author, for they desire no more in any thing but to be new, to be agreeable. If I found consolation among such, I was as much disquieted by the incapacity of others. These are mortals who have a certain curiosity without power of reflection, and perused my papers like spectators rather than readers. But there is so little pleasure in inquiries that so nearly concern ourselves (it being the worst way in the world to fame, to be too anxious about it) that upon the whole I resolved for the future to go on in my ordinary way; and without too much fear or hope about the business of reputation, to be very careful of the design of my actions, but very negligent of the consequences of them.

It is an endless and frivolous pursuit to act by any other rule, than the care of satisfying our own minds in what we do. One would think a silent man, who concerned himself with no one breathing, should be very little liable to misrepresentations; and yet I remember I was once taken up for a Jesuit, for no other reason but my profound taciturnity. It is from this misfortune, that, to be out of harm's way, I have ever since affected crowds. He who comes into assemblies only to gratify his curiosity, and not to make a figure, enjoys the pleasures of retirement in a more exquisite degree than he possibly could in his closet: the lover, the ambitious, and the miser, are followed thither by a worse crowd than any they can withdraw from. To be exempt from the passions with which others are tormented, is the only pleasing solitude. I can very justly

say with the sage, " I am never less alone than when alone."

As I am insignificant to the company in public places, and as it is visible I do not come thither as most do, to show myself, I gratify the vanity of all who pretend to make an appearance, and have often as kind looks from well-dressed gentlemen and ladies, as a poet would bestow upon one of his audience. There are so many gratifications attend this public sort of obscurity, that some little distastes I daily receive have lost their anguish; and I did, the other day, without the least displeasure, overhear one say of me, " that strange fellow;" and another answer, " I have known the fellow's face these twelve years, and so must you; but I believe you are the first ever asked who he was." There are, I must confess, many to whom my person is as well known as that of their nearest relations, who give themselves no farther trouble about calling me by my name or quality, but speak of me very currently by Mr. What-d'ye-call-him.

To make up for these trivial disadvantages, I have the highest satisfaction of beholding all nature with an unprejudiced eye; and having nothing to do with men's passions or interests, I can, with the greater sagacity, consider their talents, manners, failings, and merits.

It is remarkable, that those who want any one sense, possess the others with greater force and vivacity. Thus my want of, or rather resignation of speech, gives me the advantages of a dumb man. I have, methinks, a more than ordinary penetration

in seeing ; and flatter myself that I have looked into the highest and lowest of mankind, and made shrewd guesses, without being admitted to their conversation, at the inmost thoughts and reflections of all whom I behold. It is from hence that good or ill fortune has no manner of force towards affecting my judgment. I see men flourishing in courts, and languishing in jails, without being prejudiced from their circumstances, to their favour or disadvantage ; but from their inward manner of bearing their condition, often pity the prosperous, and admire the unhappy.

Those who converse with the dumb, know from the turn of their eyes, and the changes of their countenance, their sentiments of the objects before them. I have indulged my silence to such an extravagance, that the few who are intimate with me answer my smiles with concurrent sentences, and argue to the very point I shook my head at, without my speaking. Will Honeycomb was very entertaining the other night at a play. to a gentleman who sat on his right hand, while I was at his left. The gentleman believed Will was talking to himself, when upon my looking with great approbation at a young thing in a box before us, he said, " I am quite of another opinion. She has, I will allow, a very pleasing aspect, but, methinks, that simplicity in her countenance is rather childish than innocent." When I observed her a second time, he said, " I grant her dress is very becoming, but perhaps the merit of that choice is owing to her mother ; for though," continued he, " I allow a beauty to be as much to

be commended for the elegance of her dress, as a wit for that of his language, yet if she has stolen the colour of her ribands from another, or had advice about her trimmings, I shall not allow her the praise of dress, any more than I would call a plagiarist an author." When I threw my eye towards the next woman to her, Will spoke what I looked, according to his romantic imagination, in the following manner

"Behold, you who dare, that charming virgin; behold the beauty of her person chastised by the innocence of her thoughts. Chastity, good-nature, and affability, are the graces that play in her countenance; she knows she is handsome, but she knows she is good. Conscious beauty adorned with conscious virtue! What a spirit is there in those eyes! What a bloom in that person! How is the whole woman expressed in her appearance! Her air has the beauty of motion, and her look the force of language."

It was prudence to turn away my eyes from this object, and therefore I turned them to the thoughtless creatures who make up the lump of that sex, and move a knowing eye no more than the portraiture of insignificant people by ordinary painters, which are but pictures of pictures.

Thus the working of my own mind is the general entertainment of my life. I never enter into the commerce of discourse with any but my particular friends, and not in public even with them. Such a habit has perhaps raised in me uncommon reflections; but this effect I cannot communicate but by my writings. As my pleasures are almost

wholly confined to those of the sight, I take it for a peculiar happiness that I have always had an easy and familiar admittance to the fair sex. If I never praised or flattered, I never belied or contradicted them. As these compose half the world, and are, by the just complaisance and gallantry of our nation, the more powerful part of our people, I shall dedicate a considerable share of these my speculations to their service, and shall lead the young through all the becoming duties of virginity, marriage, and widowhood. When it is a woman's day, in my works, I shall endeavour at a style and air suitable to their understanding. When I say this, I must be understood to mean, that I shall not lower but exalt the subjects I treat upon. Discourse for their entertainment is not to be debased, but refined. A man may appear learned without talking sentences, as in his ordinary gesture he discovers he can dance, though he does not cut capers. In a word, I shall take for the greatest glory of my work, if among reasonable women this paper may furnish tea-table talk. In order to it, I shall treat on matters which relate to females, as they are concerned to approach or fly from the other sex, or as they are tied to them by blood, interest, or affection. Upon this occasion I think it but reasonable to declare, that whatever skill I may have in speculation, I shall never betray what the eyes of lovers say to each other in my presence. At the same time I shall not think myself obliged by this promise to conceal any false protestations which I observe made by glances in public assemblies, but endeavour to make both sexes appear in their

conduct what they are in their hearts. By this means, love, during the time of my speculations, shall be carried on with the same sincerity as any other affair of less consideration. As this is the greatest concern, men shall be from henceforth liable to the greatest reproach for misbehaviour in it. Falsehood in love shall hereafter bear a blacker aspect than infidelity in friendship, or villainy in business. For this great and good end, all breaches against that noble passion, the cement of society, shall be severely examined. But this, and all other matters loosely hinted at now, and in my former papers, shall have their proper place in my following discourses. The present writing is only to admonish the world, that they shall not find me an idle but a busy Spectator. R.

IV. COFFEE-HOUSES.

(From *The Spectator*)

No. 49.] Thursday, April 26, 1711.

Hominem pagina nostra sapit — Mart. *Epig.* x. 4.

Men and Manners I describe.

It is very natural for a man who is not turned for mirthful meetings of men, or assemblies of the fair sex, to delight in that sort of conversation which we find in coffee-houses. Here a man of my temper is in his element, for if he cannot talk, he can still be more agreeable to his company, as well as pleased in himself, in being only a hearer. It is a secret

known but to few, yet of no small use in the conduct of life, that when you fall into a man's conversation, the first thing you should consider is, whether he has a greater inclination to hear you, or that you should hear him. The latter is the more general desire, and I know very able flatterers that never speak a word in praise of the persons from whom they obtain daily favours, but still practise a skilful attention to whatever is uttered by those with whom they converse. We are very curious to observe the behaviour of great men and their clients: but the same passions and interests move men in lower spheres; and I (that have nothing else to do but make observations) see in every parish, street, lane, and alley, of this populous city, a little potentate that has his court and his flatterers, who lay snares for his affection and favour by the same arts that are practised upon men in higher stations.

In the place I most usually frequent, men differ rather in the time of day in which they make a figure, than in any real greatness above one another. I, who am at the coffee-house at six in the morning, know that my friend Beaver, the haberdasher, has a levee of more undissembled friends and admirers than most of the courtiers or generals of Great Britain. Every man about him has, perhaps, a newspaper in his hand; but none can pretend to guess what step will be taken in any one court of Europe, till Mr. Beaver has thrown down his pipe, and declares what measures the allies must enter into upon this new posture of affairs. Our coffee-house is near one of the inns of court, and Beaver has the audience

and admiration of his neighbours from six till within a quarter of eight. at which time he is interrupted by the students of the house ; some of whom are ready dressed for Westminster at eight in a morning, with faces as busy as if they were retained in every cause there ; and others come in their night-gowns to saunter away their time, as if they never designed to go thither. I do not know that I meet in any of my walks, objects which move both my spleen and laughter so effectually, as those young fellows at the Grecian, Squire's, Searle's, and all other coffee-houses adjacent to the law, who rise early for no other purpose but to publish their laziness. One would think these young virtuosos take a gay cap and slippers, with a scarf and party-coloured gown, to be the ensigns of dignity ; for the vain things approach each other with an air, which shews they regard one another for their vestments. I have observed, that the superiority among these proceeds from an opinion of gallantry and fashion. The gentleman in the strawberry sash, who presides so much over the rest, has, it seems, subscribed to every opera this last winter.

When the day grows too busy for these gentlemen to enjoy any longer the pleasures of their dishabille with any manner of confidence, they give place to men who have business or good sense in their faces, and come to the coffee-house either to transact affairs, or enjoy conversation. The persons to whose behaviour and discourse I have most regard, are such as are between these two sorts of men ; such as have not spirits too active to be happy and

well pleased in a private condition, nor complexions too warm to make them neglect the duties and relations of life. Of these sort of men consist the worthier part of mankind; of these are all good fathers, generous brothers, sincere friends, and faithful subjects. Their entertainments are derived rather from reason than imagination: which is the cause that there is no impatience or instability in their speech or action. You see in their countenances they are at home, and in quiet possession of the present instant as it passes, without desiring to quicken it by gratifying any passion, or prosecuting any new design. These are the men formed for society, and those little communities which we express by the word neighbourhoods.

The coffee-house is the place of rendezvous to all that live near it, who are thus turned to relish calm and ordinary life. Eubulus presides over the middle hours of the day, when this assembly of men meet together. He enjoys a great fortune handsomely, without launching into expense: and exerts many noble and useful qualities, without appearing in any public employment. His wisdom and knowledge are serviceable to all that think fit to make use of them; and he does the office of a counsel, a judge, an executor, and a friend, to all his acquaintance, not only without the profits which attend such offices, but also without the deference and homage which are usually paid to them. The giving of thanks is displeasing to him. The greatest gratitude you can shew him is, to let him see that you are a better man for his services; and that

you are as ready to oblige others, as he is to oblige you.

In the private exigencies of his friends, he lends at legal value considerable sums which he might highly increase by rolling in the public stocks. He does not consider in whose hands his money will improve most, but where it will do most good.

Eubulus has so great an authority in his little diurnal audience, that when he shakes his head at any piece of public news, they all of them appear dejected; and on the contrary, go home to their dinners with a good stomach and cheerful aspect when Eubulus seems to intimate that things go well. Nay, their veneration towards him is so great, that when they are in other company they speak and act after him; are wise in his sentences, and are no sooner sat down at their own tables, but they hope or fear, rejoice or despond, as they saw him do at the coffee-house. In a word, every man is Eubulus as soon as his back is turned.

Having here given an account of the several reigns that succeed each other from day-break till dinner-time, I shall mention the monarchs of the afternoon on another occasion, and shut up the whole series of them with the history of Tom the Tyrant; who, as the first minister of the coffee-house, takes the government upon him between the hours of eleven and twelve at night, and gives his orders in the most arbitrary manner to the servants below him, as to the disposition of liquors, coal, and cinders.

R.

JOSEPH ADDISON

V. THE AIM OF "THE SPECTATOR"

(From *The Spectator*)

No. 10]

Monday, March 12, 1711.

Non aliter quam qui adverso vix flumine lembum
Remigiis subigit, si brachia forte remisit,
Atque illum in præceps pronò rapit alveus amni.

Virg. *Georg.* i. 201..

So the boat's brawny crew the current stem,
And, slow advancing, struggle with the stream :
But if they slack their hands, or cease to strive,
Then down the flood with headlong haste they drive.
Dryden.

It is with much satisfaction that I hear this great city inquiring day by day after these my papers, and receiving my morning lectures with a becoming seriousness and attention. My publisher tells me, that there are already three thousand of them distributed every day : so that if I allow twenty readers to every paper, which I look upon as a modest computation, I may reckon about threescore thousand disciples in London and Westminster, who I hope will take care to distinguish themselves from the thoughtless herd of their ignorant and inattentive ren. Since I have raised to myself so great

an audience, I shall spare no pains to make their instruction agreeable, and their diversion useful. For which reasons I shall endeavour to enliven morality with wit, and to temper wit with morality, that my readers may, if possible, both ways find their account in the speculation of the day. And to the end that their virtue and discretion may not be short, transient, intermitting starts of thought, I have resolved to refresh their memories from day to day, till I have recovered them out of that desperate state of vice and folly, into which the age is fallen. The mind that lies fallow for a single day, sprouts up in follies that are only to be killed by a constant and assiduous culture. It was said of Socrates, that he brought Philosophy down from heaven, to inhabit among men; and I shall be ambitious to have it said of me, that I have brought Philosophy out of closets and libraries, schools and colleges, to dwell in clubs and assemblies, at tea-tables, and in coffee-houses.

I would therefore in a very particular manner recommend these my speculations to all well regulated families, that set apart an hour in every morning for tea and bread and butter; and would earnestly advise them for their good to order this paper to be punctually served up, and to be looked upon as a part of the tea-equipage.

Sir Francis Bacon observes, that a well-written book, compared with its rivals and antagonists, is like Moses's serpent, that immediately swallowed up and devoured those of the Egyptians. I shall not be so vain as to think, that where the Spectator

appears, the other public prints will vanish: but shall leave it to my reader's consideration, whether it is not much better to be let into the knowledge of one's self, than to hear what passes in Muscovy or Poland: and to amuse ourselves with such writings as tend to the wearing out of ignorance, passion, and prejudice, than such as naturally conduce to inflame hatreds, and make enmities irreconcilable.

In the next place I would recommend this paper to the daily perusal of those gentlemen whom I cannot but consider as my good brothers and allies, I mean the fraternity of Spectators, who live in the world without having any thing to do in it; and either by the affluence of their fortunes, or laziness of their dispositions, have no other business with the rest of mankind, but to look upon them. Under this class of men are comprehended all contemplative tradesmen, titular physicians, fellows of the royal society, Templars that are not given to be contentious, and statesmen that are out of business; in short, every one that considers the world as a theatre, and desires to form a right judgment of those who are the actors on it.

There is another set of men that I must likewise lay a claim to, whom I have lately called the blanks of society, as being altogether unfurnished with ideas, till the business and conversation of the day had supplied them. I have often considered these poor souls with an eye of great commiseration, when I have heard them asking the first man they have met with, whether there was any news stirring? and by that means gathering together materials.

for thinking. These needy persons do not know what to talk of, till about twelve o'clock in the morning; for by that time they are pretty good judges of the weather, know which way the wind sits, and whether the Dutch mail be come in. As they lie at the mercy of the first man they meet, and are grave or impertinent all the day long, according to the notions which they have imbibed in the morning, I would earnestly intreat of them not to stir out of their chambers till they have read this paper, and do promise them that I will daily instil into them such sound and wholesome sentiments, as shall have a good effect on their conversation for the ensuing twelve hours.

But there are none to whom this paper will be more useful than to the female world. I have often thought there has not been sufficient pains taken in finding out proper employment and diversions for the fair ones. Their amusements seem contrived for them, rather as they are women, than as they are reasonable creatures; and are more adapted to the sex than to the species. The toilet is their great scene of business, and the right adjusting of their hair the principal employment of their lives. The sorting of a suit of ribands is reckoned a very good morning's work; and if they make an excursion to a mercer's or a toy-shop, so great a fatigue makes them unfit for any thing else all the day after. Their more serious occupations are sewing and embroidery, and their greatest drudgery the preparation of jellies and sweetmeats. This, I say, is the state of ordinary women; though I know there are multi-

friends, when they have such a handle given them of being witty. But let them remember, that I do hereby enter my caveat against this piece of raillery.

C.

VI. THE CLUB CRAZE

(From *The Spectator*)

No. 9.]

Saturday, March 10, 1711.

Tigris agit rabida cum tigride pacem
Perpetuam, sævis inter se convenit ursis.

Juv. *Sat.* xv. 163.

Tiger with tiger, bear with bear, you'll find
In leagues offensive and defensive join'd.—Tate.

MAN is said to be a sociable animal, and, as an instance of it, we may observe that we take all occasions and pretences of forming ourselves into those little nocturnal assemblies, which are commonly known by the name of clubs. When a set of men find themselves agree in any particular, though never so trivial, they establish themselves into a kind of fraternity, and meet once or twice a week, upon the account of such a fantastic resemblance. I know a considerable market-town, in which there was a club of fat men, that did not come together (as you may well suppose) to entertain one another with sprightliness and wit, but to keep one another in countenance. The room where the club met was something of the largest, and had two entrances, the one by a door of a moderate size, and the other by a pair of folding-doors. If a candidate for this corpulent club could make his entrance through

the first, he was looked upon as unqualified; but if he stuck in the passage, and could not force his way through it, the folding-doors were immediately thrown open for his reception, and he was saluted as a brother. I have heard that this club, though it consisted but of fifteen persons, weighed above three ton.

In opposition to this society, there sprung up another composed of scarecrows and skeletons, who, being very meagre and envious, did all they could to thwart the designs of their bulky brethren, whom they represented as men of dangerous principles; till at length they worked them out of the favour of the people, and consequently out of the magistracy. These factions tore the corporation in pieces for several years, till at length they came to this accommodation; that the two bailiffs of the town should be annually chosen out of the two clubs; by which means the principal magistrates are at this day coupled like rabbits, one fat and one lean.

Every one has heard of the club, or rather the confederacy, of the kings. This grand alliance was formed a little after the return of King Charles the Second, and admitted into it men of all qualities and professions, provided they agreed in the surname of King, which, as they imagined, sufficiently declared the owners of it to be altogether untainted with republican and anti-monarchical principles.

A Christian name has likewise been often used as a badge of distinction, and made the occasion of a club. That of the George's, which used to meet at the sign of the George, on St. George's day,

and swear "Before George," is still fresh in every one's memory.

There are at present, in several parts of this city, what they call street-clubs, in which the chief inhabitants of the street converse together every night. I remember, upon my inquiring after lodgings in Ormond-street, the landlord, to recommend that quarter of the town, told me there was at that time a very good club in it ; he also told me, upon farther discourse with him, that two or three noisy country squires, who were settled there the year before, had considerably sunk the price of house-rent ; and that the Club (to prevent the like inconveniences for the future) had thoughts of taking every house that became vacant into their own hands, till they had found a tenant for it, of a sociable nature and good conversation.

The Hum-drum club, of which I was formerly an unworthy member, was made up of very honest gentlemen of peaceable dispositions, that used to sit together, smoke their pipes, and say nothing till midnight. The Mum club (as I am informed) is an institution of the same nature, and as great an enemy to noise.

After these two innocent societies, I cannot forbear mentioning a very mischievous one, that was erected in the reign of King Charles the Second ; I mean the club of Duellists, in which none was to be admitted that had not fought his man. The president of it was said to have killed half a dozen in single combat ; and as for the other members, they took their seats according to the

number of their slain. There was likewise a side-table, for such as had only drawn blood, and shown a laudable ambition of taking the first opportunity to qualify themselves for the first table. This club, consisting only of men of honour, did not continue long, most of the members of it being put to the sword, or hanged, a little after its institution.

Our modern celebrated clubs are founded upon eating and drinking, which are points wherein most men agree, and in which the learned and the illiterate, the dull and the airy, the philosopher and the buffoon, can all of them bear a part. The Kit-Cat itself is said to have taken its original from a mutton-pie. The Beef-steak and October clubs, are neither of them averse to eating and drinking, if we may form a judgment of them from their respective titles.

When men are thus knit together, by a love of society, not a spirit of faction, and do not meet to censure or annoy those that are absent, but to enjoy one another ; when they are thus combined for their own improvement, or for the good of others, or at least to relax themselves from the business of the day by an innocent and cheerful conversation, there may be something very useful in these little institutions and establishments.

I cannot forbear concluding this paper with a scheme of laws that I met with upon a wall in a little alehouse. How I came thither I may inform my reader at a more convenient time. These laws were enacted by a knot of artisans and mechanics, who used to meet every night ; and as there is some-

thing in them which gives us a pretty picture of low life, I shall transcribe them word for word.

Rules to be observed in the Two-penny Club, erected in this place for the preservation of friendship and good neighbourhood.

1. Every member at his first coming in shall lay down his two-pence.

2. Every member shall fill his pipe out of his own box.

3. If any member absents himself, he shall forfeit a penny for the use of the club, unless in case of sickness or imprisonment.

4. If any member swears or curses, his neighbour may give him a kick upon the shins.

5. If any member tells stories in the club that are not true, he shall forfeit for every third lie an half-penny.

6. If any member strikes another wrongfully, he shall pay his club for him.

7. If any member brings his wife into the club, he shall pay for whatever she drinks or smokes.

8. If any member's wife comes to fetch him home from the club, she shall speak to him without the door.

9. None shall be admitted into the club that is of the same trade with any member of it.

10. None of the club shall have his clothes or shoes made or mended, but by a brother member.

11. No non-juror shall be capable of being a member.

The morality of this little club is guarded by such wholesome laws and penalties, that I question not but my reader will be as well pleased with them as he would have been with the *Leges Convivales* of Ben Jonson, the regulations of an old Roman club cited by Lipsius, or the rules of a *Symposium* in an ancient Greek author. C.

VII. SIR ROGER DE COVERLEY AT HOME

(From *The Spectator*)

[No. 106.]

July 2, 1711.

Hinc tibi Copia
Manabit ad plenum, benigno
Ruris honorum opulenta cornu.—Hor. 1 *Od.* xvii. 14.

Here Plenty's liberal horn shall pour
Of fruits for thee a copious show'r,
Rich honours of the quiet plain.

HAVING often received an invitation from my friend Sir Roger de Coverley to pass away a month with him in the country, I last week accompanied him thither, and am settled with him for some time at his country-house, where I intend to form several of my ensuing speculations. Sir Roger, who is very well acquainted with my humour, lets me rise and go to bed when I please; dine at his own table, or in my chamber, as I think fit; sit still, and say nothing, without bidding me be merry. When the gentlemen of the country come to see him, he only shows me at a distance. As I have been walking in his fields, I have observed them stealing a sight of me over an hedge, and have heard the knight

desiring them not to let me see them, for that I hated to be stared at.

I am the more at ease in Sir Roger's family, because it consists of sober and staid persons; for as the knight is the best master in the world, he seldom changes his servants; and as he is beloved by all about him, his servants never care for leaving him: by this means his domestics are all in years, and grown old with their master. You would take his *valet de chambre* for his brother; his butler is grey headed; his groom is one of the gravest men that I have ever seen; and his coachman has the looks of a privy-councillor. You see the goodness of the master even in the old house-dog; and in a gray pad, that is kept in the stable with great care and tenderness out of regard to his past services, though he has been useless for several years.

I could not but observe with a great deal of pleasure, the joy that appeared in the countenances of these ancient domestics upon my friend's arrival at his country-seat. Some of them could not refrain from tears at the sight of their old master; every one of them pressed forward to do something for him, and seemed discouraged if they were not employed. At the same time the good old knight, with a mixture of the father and the master of the family, tempered the inquiries after his own affairs with several kind questions relating to themselves. This humanity and good-nature engages everybody to him, so that when he is pleasant upon any of them, all his family are in good humour, and none so much as the person whom he diverts himself with: on the contrary,

if he coughs, or betrays any infirmity of old age, it is easy for a stander-by to observe a secret concern in the looks of all his servants.

My worthy friend has put me under the particular care of his butler, who is a very prudent man, and, as well as the rest of his fellow-servants, wonderfully desirous of pleasing me, because they have often heard their master talk of me as of his particular friend.

My chief companion, when Sir Roger is diverting himself in the woods or the fields, is a very venerable man, who is ever with Sir Roger, and has lived at his house in the nature of a chaplain above thirty years. This gentleman is a person of good sense and some learning, of a very regular life, and obliging conversation ; he heartily loves Sir Roger, and knows that he is very much in the old knight's esteem ; so that he lives in the family rather as a relation than a dependent.

I have observed in several of my papers, that my friend Sir Roger, amidst all his good qualities, is something of an humourist ; and that his virtues, as well as imperfections, are, as it were, tinged by a certain extravagance, which makes them particularly his, and distinguishes them from those of other men. This cast of mind, as it is generally very innocent in itself, so it renders his conversation highly agreeable, and more delightful than the same degree of sense and virtue would appear in their common and ordinary colours. As I was walking with him last night, he asked me how I liked the good man whom I have just now mentioned ; and,

without staying for my answer, told me, that he was afraid of being insulted with Latin and Greek at his own table ; for which reason, he desired a particular friend of his at the University, to find him out a clergyman rather of plain sense than much learning, of a good aspect, a clear voice, a sociable temper, and, if possible, a man that understood a little of backgammon. My friend (says Sir Roger) found me out this gentleman, who, besides the endowments required of him, is, they tell me, a good scholar, though he does not show it. I have given him the parsonage of the parish ; and because I know his value, have settled upon him a good annuity for life. If he outlives me, he shall find that he was higher in my esteem than perhaps he thinks he is. He has now been with me thirty years ; and, though he does not know I have taken notice of it, has never in all that time asked anything of me for himself, though he is every day soliciting me for something in behalf of one or other of my tenants, his parishioners. There has not been a law-suit in the parish since he has lived among them : if any dispute arises, they apply themselves to him for the decision ; if they do not acquiesce in his judgment, which I think never happened above once, or twice at most, they appeal to me. At his first settling with me, I made him a present of all the good sermons which have been printed in English, and only begged of him that every Sunday he would pronounce one of them in the pulpit. Accordingly he has digested them into such a series, that they follow one another naturally, and make a continued system of practical divinity.

As Sir Roger was going on in his story, the gentleman we were talking of came up to us ; and upon the knight's asking him who preached to-morrow (for it was Saturday night), told us, the Bishop of St. Asaph in the morning and Dr. South in the afternoon. He then showed us his list of preachers for the whole year, where I saw with a great deal of pleasure, Archbishop Tillotson, Bishop Sanderson, Doctor Barrow, Doctor Calamy, with several living authors who have published discourses of practical divinity. I no sooner saw this venerable man in the pulpit, but I very much approved of my friend's insisting upon the qualifications of a good aspect and a clear voice ; for I was so charmed with the gracefulness of his figure and delivery, as well as the discourses he pronounced, that I think I never passed any time more to my satisfaction. A sermon repeated after this manner, is like the composition of a poet in the mouth of a graceful actor.

I could heartily wish that more of our country clergy would follow this example, and, instead of wasting their spirits in laborious compositions of their own, would endeavour after a handsome elocution, and all those other talents that are proper to enforce what has been penned by greater masters. This would not only be more easy to themselves, but more edifying to the people.

VIII. THE DEATH OF SIR ROGER.

(From *The Spectator*)

[No. 517.] Thursday, October 23, 1712.

Heu Pietas ! heu prisca Fides !—Virg. *Æn.* vi. 878.

Mirror of ancient faith !

Undaunted worth ! Inviolable truth !—Dryden.

WE last night received a piece of ill news at our club, which very sensibly afflicted every one of us. I question not but my readers themselves will be troubled at the hearing of it. To keep them no longer in suspense, Sir Roger de Coverley is dead. He departed this life at his house in the country, after a few weeks' sickness. Sir Andrew Freeport has a letter from one of his correspondents in those parts, that informs him the old man caught a cold at the country sessions, as he was very warmly promoting an address of his own penning, in which he succeeded according to his wishes. But this particular comes from a Whig justice of peace, who was always Sir Roger's enemy and antagonist. I have letters both from the chaplain and Captain Sentry, which mention nothing of it, but are filled with many particulars to the honour of the good old man. I have likewise a letter from the butler, who took so much care of me last summer when I was at the knight's house. As my friend the butler mentions, in the simplicity of his heart, several circumstances the others have passed over in silence, I shall give my reader a copy of his letter, without any alteration or diminution.

As Sir Roger was going on in his story, the gentleman we were talking of came up to us; and upon the knight's asking him who preached to-morrow (for it was Saturday night), told us, the Bishop of St. Asaph in the morning and Dr. South in the afternoon. He then showed us his list of preachers for the whole year, where I saw with a great deal of pleasure, Archbishop Tillotson, Bishop Sanderson, Doctor Barrow, Doctor Calamy, with several living authors who have published discourses of practical divinity. I no sooner saw this venerable man in the pulpit, but I very much approved of my friend's insisting upon the qualifications of a good aspect and a clear voice; for I was so charmed with the gracefulness of his figure and delivery, as well as the discourses he pronounced, that I think I never passed any time more to my satisfaction. A sermon repeated after this manner, is like the composition of a poet in the mouth of a graceful actor.

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Mirror of ancient faith !

Undaunted worth ! Inviolable truth !—Dryden.

‘We last night received a piece of ill news at our club, which very sensibly afflicted every one of us. I question not but my readers themselves will be troubled at the hearing of it. To keep them no longer in suspense, Sir Roger de Coverley is dead. He departed this life at his house in the country, after a few weeks’ sickness. Sir Andrew Freeport has a letter from one of his correspondents in those parts, that informs him the old man caught a cold at the country sessions, as he was very warmly promoting an address of his own penning, in which he succeeded according to his wishes. But this particular comes from a Whig justice of peace, who was always Sir Roger’s enemy and antagonist. I have letters both from the chaplain and Captain Sentry, which mention nothing of it, but are filled with many particulars to the honour of the good old man. I have likewise a letter from the butler, who took so much care of me last summer when I was at the knight’s house. As my friend the butler mentions, in the simplicity of his heart, several circumstances the others have passed over in silence, I shall give my reader a copy of his letter, without any alteration or diminution.

"Honoured Sir,

"Knowing that you was my old master's good friend, I could not forbear sending you the melancholy news of his death, which has afflicted the whole country, as well as his poor servants who loved him. I may say, better than we did our lives. I am afraid he caught his death the last country sessions, where he would go to see justice done to a poor widow woman and her fatherless children, that had been wronged by a neighbouring gentleman. for, you know, my good master was always the poor man's friend. Upon his coming home, the first complaint he made was, that he had lost his roast-beef stomach, not being able to touch a sirloin, which was served up according to custom: and you know he used to take great delight in it. From that time forward he grew worse and worse, but still kept a good heart to the last. Indeed we were once in great hopes of his recovery, upon a kind message that was sent him from the widow lady whom he had made love to the forty last years of his life: but this only proved a lightning before his death. He has bequeathed to this lady, as a token of his love, a great pearl necklace, and a couple of silver bracelets set with jewels, which belonged to my good old lady his mother: he has bequeathed the fine white gelding, that he used to ride a hunting upon, to his chaplain, because he thought he would be kind to him, and has left you all his books. He has, moreover, bequeathed to the chaplain a very pretty tenement with good lands about it. It being a very cold day when he made his will, he left for mourning to every man in

the parish a great frieze coat and to every woman a black riding-hood. It was a most moving sight to see him take leave of his poor servants, commending us all for our fidelity, whilst we were not able to speak a word for weeping. As we most of us are grown grey-headed in our dear master's service, he has left us pensions and legacies which we may live very comfortably upon the remaining part of our days. He has bequeathed a great deal more in charity, which is not yet come to my knowledge, and it is peremptorily said in the parish, that he has left money to build a steeple to the church: for he was heard to say some time ago, that if he lived two years longer, Coverley church should have a steeple to it. The chaplain tells everybody that he made a very good end, and never speaks of him without tears. He was buried, according to his own directions, among the family of the Coverlies, on the left hand of his father Sir Arthur. The coffin was carried by six of his tenants, and the pall held up by six of the quorum: the whole parish followed the corpse with heavy hearts, and in their mourning suits; the men in frieze, and the women in riding-hoods. Captain Sentry, my master's nephew, has taken possession of the hall-house, and the whole estate. When my old master saw him, a little before his death, he shook him by the hand, and wished him joy of the estate which was falling to him, desiring him only to make a good use of it, and to pay the several legacies, and the gifts of charity, which he told him he had left as quit-rents upon the estate. The captain truly seems a courteous man, though he says but

little. He makes much of those whom my master loved, and shows great kindness to the old house-dog, that you know my poor master was so fond of. It would have gone to your heart to have heard the moans the dumb creature made on the day of my master's death. He has never joyed himself since; no more has any of us. It was the melancholiest day for the poor people that ever happened in Worcestershire. This being all from,

"Honoured sir, your most sorrowful servant,

"EDWARD BISCUIT.

"P.S.—My master desired, some weeks before he died, that a book which comes up to you by the carrier, should be given to Sir Andrew Freeport in his name."

This letter, notwithstanding the poor butler's manner of writing it, gave us such an idea of our good old friend, that, upon the reading of it, there was not a dry eye in the club. Sir Andrew opening the book, found it to be a collection of Acts of Parliament. There was, in particular, the Act of Uniformity, with some passages in it marked by Sir Roger's own hand. Sir Andrew found that they related to two or three points, which he had disputed with Sir Roger the last time he appeared at the club. Sir Andrew, who would have been merry at such an incident on another occasion, at the sight of the old man's handwriting, burst into tears, and put the book into his pocket. Captain Sentry informs me, that the knight has left rings and mourning for every one in the club.

SAMUEL JOHNSON

IX. THE VOYAGE OF LIFE.

(From *The Rambler*)

No. 102.]

Saturday, March 9, 1751.

Ipsa quoque assiduo labuntur tempora motu
Non secus ac flumen : neque enim consistere flumen,
Nec levis hora potest ; sed ut unda impellitur unda,
Urgeturque prior veniente, urgetque priorem,
Tempora sic fugiunt pariter, pariterque sequuntur.

Ovid.

With constant motion as the moments glide,
Behold in running life the rolling tide !
For none can stem by art, or stop by pow'r,
The flowing ocean, or the fleeting hour :
But wave by wave pursu'd arrives on shore,
And each impell'd behind impels before :
So time on time revolving we descry ;
So minutes follow, and so minutes fly.—Elphinston.

“ LIFE,” says Seneca, “ is a voyage, in the progress of which we are perpetually changing our scenes : we first leave childhood behind us, then youth, then the years of ripened manhood, then the better and more pleasing part of old age.” The perusal of this passage having incited in me a train of reflections on the state of man, the incessant fluctuation of his wishes, the gradual change of his disposition to all external objects, and the thoughtlessness

with which he floats along the stream of time, I sunk into a slumber amidst my meditations, and on a sudden found my ears filled with the tumult of labour, the shouts of alacrity, the shrieks of alarm, the whistle of winds, and the dash of waters.

My astonishment for a time repressed my curiosity ; but soon recovering myself so far as to enquire whither we were going, and what was the cause of such clamour and confusion, I was told that they were launching out into the *ocean of life* ; that we had already passed the straits of Infancy, in which multitudes had perished, some by the weakness and fragility of their vessels, and more by the folly, perverseness, or negligence, of those who undertook to steer them ; and that we were now on the main sea, abandoned to the winds and billows, without any other means of security than the care of the pilot, whom it was always in our power to choose among great numbers that offered their direction and assistance.

I then looked round with anxious eagerness ; and first turning my eyes behind me, saw a stream flowing through flowery islands, which every one that sailed along seemed to behold with pleasure : but no sooner touched, than the current, which, though not noisy or turbulent, was yet irresistible, bore him away. Beyond these islands all was darkness, nor could any of the passengers describe the shore at which he first embarked. Before me, and each other side, was an expanse of water violently agitated, and covered with so a thick a mist, that the most perspicuous eye could see but a little way. It appeared

to be full of rocks and whirlpools, for many sunk unexpectedly while they were courting the gale with full sails, and insulting those whom they had left behind. So numerous, indeed, were the dangers, and so thick the darkness, that no caution could confer security. Yet there were many who, by false intelligence, betrayed their followers into whirlpools, or by violence pushed those whom they found in their way against the rocks.

The current was invariable and insurmountable; but though it was impossible to sail against it, or to return to the place that was once passed, yet it was not so violent as to allow no opportunities for dexterity or courage, since, though none could retreat back from danger, yet they might often avoid it by oblique direction.

It was, however, not very common to steer with much care or prudence; for by some universal infatuation, every man appeared to think himself safe, though he saw his consorts every moment sinking round him; and no sooner had the waves closed over them, than their fate and their misconduct were forgotten; the voyage was pursued with the same jocund confidence; every man congratulated himself upon the soundness of his vessel, and believed himself able to stem the whirlpool in which his friend was swallowed, or glide over the rocks on which he was dashed: nor was it often observed that the sight of a wreck made any man change his course; if he turned aside for a moment, he soon forgot the rudder, and left himself again to the disposal of chance.

This negligence did not proceed from indifference, or from weariness of their present condition ; for not one of those who thus rushed upon destruction failed, when he was sinking, to call loudly upon his associates for that help which could not now be given him ; and many spent their last moments in cautioning others against the folly by which they were intercepted in the midst of their course. Their benevolence was sometimes praised, but their admonitions were unregarded.

The vessels in which we had embarked being confessedly unequal to the turbulence of the stream of life, were visibly impaired in the course of the voyage ; so that every passenger was certain, that how long soever he might, by favourable accidents, or by incessant vigilance, be preserved, he must sink at last.

This necessity of perishing might have been expected to sadden the gay, and intimidate the daring. at least to keep the melancholy and timorous in perpetual torments, and hinder them from any enjoyment of the varieties and gratifications which nature offered them as the solace of their labours ; yet in effect none seemed less to expect destruction than those to whom it was most dreadful ; they all had the art of concealing their danger from themselves ; and those who knew their inability to bear the sight of the terrors that embarrassed their way, took care never to look forward, but found some amusement for the present moment, and generally entertained themselves by playing with Hope, who was the constant associate of the voyage of life.

Yet all that Hope ventured to promise, even to those whom she favoured most, was, not that they should escape, but that they should sink last ; and with this promise every one was satisfied, though he laughed at the rest for seeming to believe it. Hope, indeed, apparently mocked the credulity of her companions ; for in proportion as their vessels grew leaky, she redoubled her assurances of safety ; and none were more busy in making provisions for a long voyage, than they whom all but themselves saw likely to perish soon by irreparable decay.

In the midst of the current of life was the *gulf of Intemperance*, a dreadful whirlpool, interspersed with rocks, of which the pointed crags were concealed under water, and the tops covered with herbage, on which Ease spread couches of repose, and with shades, where Pleasure warbled the song of invitation. Within sight of these rocks all who sailed on the ocean of life must necessarily pass. Reason, indeed, was always at hand to steer the passengers through a narrow outlet by which they might escape ; but very few could, by her intreaties or remonstrances, be induced to put the rudder into her hand, without stipulating that she should approach so near unto the rocks of Pleasure, that they might solace themselves with a short enjoyment of that delicious region, after which they always determined to pursue their course without any other deviation.

Reason was too often prevailed upon so far by these promises, as to venture her charge within the eddy of the gulf of Intemperance, where, indeed, the circumvolution was weak, but yet interrupted

the course of the vessel, and drew it, by insensible rotations, towards the centre. She then repented her temerity, and with all her force endeavoured to retreat; but the draught of the gulf was generally too strong to be overcome; and the passenger, having danced in circles with a pleasing and giddy velocity, was at last overwhelmed and lost. Those few whom Reason was able to extricate, generally suffered so many shocks upon the points which shot out from the rocks of Pleasure, that they were unable to continue their course with the same strength and facility as before, but floated along timorously and feebly, endangered by every breeze, and shattered by every ruffle of the water, till they sunk, by slow degrees, after long struggles, and innumerable expedients, always repining at their own folly, and warning others against the first approach of the gulf of Intemperance.

There were artists who professed to repair the breaches and stop the leaks of the vessels which had been shattered on the rocks of Pleasure. Many appeared to have great confidence in their skill, and some, indeed, were preserved by it from sinking, who had received only a single blow; but I remarked that few vessels lasted long which had been much repaired, nor was it found that the artists themselves continued afloat longer than those who had least of their assistance.

The only advantage which, in the voyage of life, the cautious had above the negligent, was, that they sunk later, and more suddenly; for they passed forward till they had sometimes seen all those in

whose company they had issued from the straits of Infancy perish in the way, and at last were over-set by a cross breeze, without the toil of resistance, or the anguish of expectation. But such as had often fallen against the rocks of Pleasure, commonly subsided by sensible degrees, contended long with the encroaching waters, and harassed themselves by labours that scarce Hope herself could flatter with success.

As I was looking upon the various fate of the multitude about me, I was suddenly alarmed with an admonition from some unknown power—"Gaze not idly upon others when thou thyself art sinking. Whence is this thoughtless tranquillity, when thou and they are equally endangered?" I looked; and, seeing the gulf of Intemperance before me, started and awaked.

X. THE REQUISITES OF TRUE FRIENDSHIP

(From *The Rambler*)

No. 64.] Saturday, October 27, 1750.

Idem velle, et idem nolle, ea demum firma amicitia est.
Sallust.

To live in friendship is to have the same desires and the same aversions.

WHEN Socrates was building himself a house at Athens, being asked by one that observed the littleness of the design, why a man so eminent would not have an abode more suitable to his dignity? he replied, that he should think himself sufficiently accommo-

-dated, if he could see that narrow habitation filled with real friends. Such was the opinion of this great master of human life concerning the infrequency of such an union of minds as might deserve the name of Friendship, that, among the multitudes whom vanity or curiosity, civility or veneration, crouded about him, he did not expect that very spacious apartments would be necessary to contain all that should regard him with sincere kindness, or adhere to him with steady fidelity.

So many qualities are indeed requisite to the possibility of friendship, and so many accidents must concur to its rise and its continuance, that the greatest part of mankind content themselves without it, and supply its place as they can, with interest and dependance.

Multitudes are unqualified for a constant and warm reciprocation of benevolence, as they are incapacitated for any other. elevated excellence by perpetual attention to their interest, and unresisting subjection to their passions. Long habits may superinduce inability to deny any desire, or repress, by superior motives, the importunities of any immediate gratification, and an inveterate selfishness will imagine all advantages diminished in proportion as they are communicated.

But not only this hateful and confirmed corruption, but many varieties of disposition, not inconsistent with common degrees of virtue, may exclude friendship from the heart. Some ardent enough in their benevolence, and defective neither in officiousness nor liberality, are mutable and uncertain.

soon attracted by new objects, disgusted without offence, and alienated without enmity. Others are soft and flexible, easily influenced by reports or whispers, ready to catch alarms from every dubious circumstance, and to listen to every suspicion which envy and flattery shall suggest ; to follow the opinion of every confident adviser, and move by the impulse of the last breath. Some are impatient of contradiction, more willing to go wrong by their own judgment, than to be indebted for a better or safer way to the sagacity of another ; inclined to consider counsel as insult, and enquiry as want of confidence ; and to confer their regard on no other terms than unreserved submission, and implicit compliance. Some are dark and involved, equally careful to conceal good and bad purposes, and pleased with producing effects by invisible means, and shewing their design only in its execution. Others are universally communicative, alike open to every eye, and equally profuse of their own secrets and those of others, without the necessary vigilance of caution, or the honest arts of prudent integrity ; ready to accuse without malice, and to betray without treachery. Any of these may be useful to the community, and pass through the world with the reputation of good purposes and uncorrupted morals, but they are unfit for close and tender intimacies. He cannot properly be chosen for a friend whose kindness is exhaled by its own warmth, or frozen by the first blast of slander ; he cannot be a useful counsellor who will hear no opinion but his own ; he will not much invite confidence whose principal

maxim is to suspect; nor can the candour and frankness of that man be much esteemed who spreads his arms to human-kind, and makes every man, without distinction, a denizen of his bosom.

That friendship may be at once fond and lasting, there must not only be equal virtue on each part, but virtue of the same kind: not only the same end must be proposed, but the same means must be approved by both. We are often, by superficial accomplishments and accidental endearments, induced to love those whom we cannot esteem; we are sometimes, by great abilities, and incontestible evidences of virtue, compelled to esteem those whom we cannot love. But friendship, compounded of esteem and love, derives from one its tenderness, and its permanence from the other; and therefore requires not only that its candidates should gain the judgment, but that they should attract the affections: that they should not only be firm in the day of distress, but gay in the hour of jollity; not only useful in exigencies, but pleasing in familiar life; their presence should give cheerfulness as well as courage, and dispel alike the gloom of fear and of melancholy.

To this mutual complacency is generally requisite an uniformity of opinions, at least of those active and conspicuous principles which discriminate parties in government, and sects in religion, and which every day operate more or less on the common business of life. For though great tenderness has, perhaps, been sometimes known to continue between men eminent in contrary factions, yet such friends are

to be shewn rather as prodigies than examples ; and it is no more proper to regulate our conduct by such instances, than to leap a precipice, because some have fallen from it and escaped with life.

It cannot but be extremely difficult to preserve private kindness in the midst of public opposition, in which will necessarily be involved a thousand incidents, extending their influence to conversation and privacy. Men engaged, by moral or religious motives, in contrary parties, will generally look with different eyes upon every man, and decide almost every question upon different principles. When such occasions of dispute happen, to comply is to betray our cause, and to maintain friendship by ceasing to deserve it ; to be silent, is to lose the happiness and dignity of independence, to live in perpetual constraint, and to desert, if not to betray : and who shall determine which of two friends shall yield, where neither believes himself mistaken, and both confess the importance of the question ? What then remains but contradiction and debate ? and from those what can be expected but acrimony and vehemence, the insolence of triumph, the vexation of defeat, and, in time, a weariness of contest, and an extinction of benevolence ? Exchange of endearments and intercourse of civility may continue, indeed, as boughs may for a while be verdant, when the root is wounded ; but the poison of discord is infused, and though the countenance may preserve its smile, the heart is hardening and contracting.

That man will not be long agreeable whom we see only in times of seriousness and severity ; and there-

fore, to maintain the softness and serenity of benevolence, it is necessary that friends partake each others pleasures as well as cares, and be led to the same diversions by similitude of taste. This is, however, not to be considered as equally indispensable with conformity of principles, because any man may honestly, according to the precepts of Horace, resign the gratifications of taste to the humour of another; and friendship may well deserve the sacrifice of pleasure, though not of conscience.

It was once confessed to me, by a painter, that no professor of his art ever loved another. This declaration is so far justified by the knowledge of life, as to damp the hopes of warm and constant friendship between men whom their studies have made competitors, and whom every favourer and every censurer are hourly inciting against each other. The utmost expectation that experience can warrant, is, that they should forbear open hostilities and secret machinations, and when the whole fraternity is attacked, be able to unite against a common foe. Some, however, though few, may perhaps be found, in whom emulation has not been able to overpower generosity, who are distinguished from lower beings by nobler motives than the love of fame, and can preserve the sacred flame of friendship from the gusts of pride, and the rubbish of interest.

Friendship is seldom lasting but between equals, or where the superiority on one side is reduced by some equivalent advantage on the other. Benefits which cannot be repaid, and obligations which cannot be discharged, are not commonly found to increase

affection ; they excite gratitude indeed, and heighten veneration, but commonly take away that easy freedom, and familiarity of intercourse, without which, though there may be fidelity, and zeal, and admiration, there cannot be friendship. Thus imperfect are all earthly blessings ; the great effect of friendship is beneficence, yet by the first act of uncommon kindness it is endangered, like plants that bear their fruit and die. Yet this consideration ought not to restrain bounty, or repress compassion, for duty is to be preferred before convenience ; and he that loses part of the pleasures of friendship by his generosity, gains in its place the gratulation of his conscience.

XI. THE IMPORTANCE OF PUNCTUALITY

(From *The Rambler*)

[No. 201.] Tuesday, February 18, 1752.

Sanctus haberi

Promissique tenax diotis factisque mereris ?

Agnosco procerem.—Juv.

Convince the world that you're devout and true,

Be just in all you say, and all you do ;

Whatever be your birth, you're sure to be

A peer of the first magnitude to me.—Stepney.

BOYLE has observed that the excellency of manufacturers, and the facility of labour, would be much promoted, if the various expedients and contrivances which lie concealed in private hands were by reciprocal communications made generally known ; for there are few operations that are not performed

by one or other with some peculiar advantages, which though singly of little importance, would by conjunction and concurrence open new inlets to knowledge, and give new powers to diligence.

There are, in like manner, several moral excellencies distributed among the different classes of a community. It was said by Cujacius, that he never read more than one book, by which he was not instructed; and he that shall enquire after virtue with ardour and attention, will seldom find a man by whose example or sentiments he may not be improved.

Every profession has some essential and appropriate virtue, without which there can be no hope of honour or success, and which, as it is more or less cultivated, confers within its sphere of activity different degrees of merit and reputation. As the astrologers range the subdivisions of mankind under the planets which they suppose to influence their lives, the moralist may distribute them according to the virtues which they necessarily practise, and consider them as distinguished by prudence or fortitude, diligence or patience.

So much are the modes of excellence settled by time and place, that men may be heard boasting in one street of that which they would anxiously conceal in another. The grounds of scorn and esteem, the topics of praise and satire, are varied according to the several virtues or vices which the course of life has disposed men to admire or abhor; but he who is solicitous for his own improvement must not be limited by local reputation, but select

from every tribe of mortals their characteristical virtues, and constellate in himself the scattered graces which shine single in other men.

The chief praise to which a trader aspires is that of punctuality, or an exact and rigorous observance of commercial engagements ; nor is there any vice of which he so much dreads the imputation, as of negligence and instability. This is a quality which the interest of mankind requires to be diffused, through all the ranks of life, but which many seem to consider as a vulgar and ignoble virtue, below the ambition of greatness or attention of wit, scarcely requisite among men of gaiety and spirit, and sold as its highest rate when it is sacrificed to a frolic or a jest.

Every man has daily occasion to remark what vexations arise from this privilege of deceiving one another. The active and vivacious have so long disdained the restraints of truth, that promises and appointments have lost their cogency, and both parties neglect their stipulations, because each concludes that they will be broken by the other. Negligence is first admitted in small affairs, and strengthened by petty indulgencies. He that is not yet hardened by custom, ventures not on the violation of important engagements, but thinks himself bound by his word in cases of property or danger, though he allows himself to forget at what time he is to meet ladies in the park, or at what tavern his friends are expecting him.

This laxity of honour would be more tolerable, if it could be restrained to the play-house, the ball-

room, or the card-table ; yet even there it is sufficiently troublesome, and darkens those moments with expectation, suspense, and resentment, which are set aside for pleasure, and from which we naturally hope for unmingled enjoyment, and total relaxation. But he that suffers the slightest breach in his morality, can seldom tell what shall enter it, or how wide it shall be made ; when a passage is open, the influx of corruption is every moment wearing down opposition, and by slow degrees deluges the heart.

Aliger entered the world a youth of lively imagination, extensive views, and untainted principles. His curiosity incited him to range from place to place, and try all the varieties of conversation ; his elegance of address and fertility of ideas gained him friends wherever he appeared ; or at least he found the general kindness of reception always shown to a young man whose birth and fortune give him a claim to notice, and who has neither by vice or folly destroyed his privileges. Aliger was pleased with this general smile of mankind, and was industrious to preserve it by compliance and officiousness, but did not suffer his desire of pleasing to vitiate his integrity. It was his established maxim, that a promise is never to be broken ; nor was it without long reluctance that he once suffered himself to be drawn away from a festal engagement by the importunity of another company.

He spent the evening, as is usual in the rudiments of vice, in perturbation and imperfect enjoyment, and met his disappointed friends in the morning with confusion and excuses. His companions, not

accustomed to such scrupulous anxiety, laughed at his uneasiness, compounded the offence for a bottle, gave him courage to break his word again, and again levied the penalty. He ventured the same experiment upon another society, and found them equally ready to consider it as a venial fault, always incident to a man of quickness and gaiety, till by degrees he began to think himself at liberty to follow the last invitation, and was no longer shocked at the turpitude of falsehood. He made no difficulty to promise his presence at distant places, and if listlessness happened to creep upon him, would sit at home with great tranquillity ; and has often sunk to sleep in a chair, while he held ten tables in continual expectations of his entrance.

It was so pleasant to live in perpetual vacancy, that he soon dismissed his attention as an useless incumbrance, and resigned himself to carelessness and dissipation, without any regard to the future or the past, or any other motive of action than the impulse of a sudden desire, or the attraction of immediate pleasure. The absent were immediately forgotten, and the hopes or fears felt by others had no influence upon his conduct. He was in speculation completely just, but never kept his promise to a creditor ; he was benevolent, but always deceived those friends whom he undertook to patronize or assist ; he was prudent, but suffered his affairs to be embarrassed for want of regulating his accounts at stated times. He courted a young lady, and when the settlements were drawn, took a ramble into the country on the day appointed to sign them. He

resolved to travel, and sent his chests on shipboard, but delayed to follow them till he lost his passage. He was summoned as an evidence in a cause of great importance, and loitered on the way till the trial was past. It is said, that when he had, with great expense, formed an interest in a borough, his opponent contrived, by some agents, who knew his temper, to lure him away on the day of election.

His benevolence draws him into the commission of a thousand crimes, which others less kind or civil would escape. His courtesy invites application ; his promises produce dependence ; he has his pockets filled with petitions, which he intends some time to deliver and enforce, and his table covered with letters of request, with which he purposes to comply ; but time slips imperceptibly away, while he is either idle or busy ; his friends lose their opportunities, and charge upon him their miscarriages and calamities.

This character, however contemptible, is not peculiar to Aliger. They whose activity of imagination is often shifting the scenes of expectation, are frequently subject to such sallies of caprice as make all their actions fortuitous, destroy the value of their friendship, obstruct the efficacy of their virtues, and set them below the meanest of those that persist in their resolutions, execute what they design, and perform what they have promised.

XII. THE MULTIPLICATION OF BOOKS

The Idler, December 1, 1759.

ONE of the peculiarities which distinguish the present age is the multiplication of books. Every day brings new advertisements of literary undertakings, and we are flattered with repeated promises of growing wise on easier terms than our progenitors.

How much either happiness or knowledge is advanced by this multitude of authors, it is not very easy to decide.

He that teaches us anything which we knew not before, is undoubtedly to be revered as a master.

He that conveys knowledge by more pleasing ways, may very properly be loved as a benefactor; and he that supplies life with innocent amusement, will be certainly caressed as a pleasing companion.

But few of those who fill the world with books, have any pretensions to the hope either of pleasing or instructing. They have often no other task than to lay two books before them, out of which they compile a third, without any new materials of their own, and with very little application of judgement to those which former authors have supplied. That all compilations are useless I do not assert. Particles of science are often very widely scattered. Writers of extensive comprehension have incidental remarks upon topics very remote from the principal subject, which are often more valuable than formal treatises,

and which yet are not known because they are not promised in the title. He that collects those under proper heads is very laudably employed, for though he exerts no great abilities in the work, he facilitates the progress of others, and by making that easy of attainment which is already written, may give some mind, more vigorous or more adventurous than his own, leisure for new thoughts and original designs.

But the collections poured lately from the press have been seldom made at any great expense of time or inquiry, and therefore only serve to distract choice without supplying any real want.

It is observed that *a corrupt society has many laws*; I know not whether it is not equally true that *an ignorant age has many books*. When the treasures of ancient knowledge lie unexamined, and original authors are neglected and forgotten, compilers and plagiaries are encouraged, who give us again what we had before, and grow great by setting before us what our own sloth had hidden from our view. Yet are not even these writers to be indiscriminately censured and rejected. Truth like beauty varies its fashions, and is best recommended by different dressers to different minds: and he that recalls the attention of mankind to any part of learning which time has left behind it, may be truly said to advance the literature of his own age. As the manners of nations vary, new topics of persuasion become necessary, and new combinations of imagery are produced; and he that can accommodate himself to the reigning taste, may always have

readers who perhaps would not have looked upon better performances.

To exact of every man who writes that he should say something new, would be to reduce authors to a small number : to oblige the most fertile genius to say only what is new, would be to contract his volume to a few pages. Yet, surely, there ought to be some bounds to repetition ; libraries ought no more to be heaped for ever with the same thoughts differently expressed, than with the same books differently decorated.

The good or evil which these secondary writers produce is seldom of any long duration. As they owe their existence to change of fashion, they commonly disappear when a new fashion becomes prevalent. The authors that in any nation last from age to age are very few, because there are very few that have any other claim to notice than that they catch hold on present curiosity, and gratify some accidental desire, or produce some temporary convenience.

But however the writers of the day may despair of future fame, they ought at least to forbear any present mischief. Though they cannot arrive at eminent heights of excellence, they might keep themselves harmless. They might take care to inform themselves before they attempt to inform others, and exert the little influence which they have for honest purposes.

But such is the present state of our literature, that the ancient sage, who thought *a great book a great evil*, would now think the multitude of books a multitude of evils. He would consider a bulky writer

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who engrossed a year, and a swarm of pamphleteers who stole each an hour, as equal wasters of human life, and would make no other difference between them, than between a beast of prey, and a flight of locusts.

OLIVER GOLDSMITH

XIII. THE CHARACTER OF THE MAN IN BLACK

(*Citizen of the World*, No. 26)

*From Lien Chi Altangi, to Fum Hoam, first president
of the Ceremonial Academy at Pekin in China.*

THOUGH fond of many acquaintances, I desire an intimacy only with a few. The Man in Black, whom I have often mentioned, is one whose friendship I could wish to acquire, because he possesses my esteem. His manners, it is true, are tinged with some strange inconsistencies; and he may be justly termed a humourist in a nation of humourists. Though he is generous even to profusion, he affects to be thought a prodigy of parsimony and prudence; though his conversation be replete with the most sordid and selfish maxims, his heart is dilated with the most unbounded love. I have known him profess himself a man-hater, while his cheek was glowing with compassion; and, while his looks were softened into pity, I have heard him use the language of the most unbounded ill-nature. Some affect civility and tenderness, others boast of having

such dispositions from nature ; but he is the only man I ever knew who seemed ashamed of his natural benevolence. He takes as much pains to hide his feelings, as any hypocrite would to conceal his indifference ; but on every unguarded moment the mask drops off, and reveals him to the most superficial observer.

In one of our late excursions into the country, happening to discourse upon the provision that was made for the poor in England, he seemed amazed how any of his countrymen could be so foolishly weak as to relieve occasional objects of charity, when the laws had made such ample provision for their support. " In every parish-house," says he, " the poor are supplied with food, clothes, fire, and a bed to lie on : they want no more, I desire no more myself ; yet still they seem discontented. I am surprised at the inactivity of our magistrates, in not taking up such vagrants, who are only a weight upon the industrious ; I am surprised that the people are found to relieve them, when they must be at the same time sensible that it in some measure encourages idleness, extravagance and imposture. Were I to advise any man for whom I had the least regard, I would caution him by all means not to be imposed upon by their false pretences : let me assure you, sir, they are impostors, every one of them, and rather merit a prison than relief."

He was proceeding in this strain, earnestly to dissuade me from an imprudence of which I am seldom guilty, when an old man, who still had about him the remnants of tattered finery, implored our compassion. He assured us that he was no common

beggar, but forced into the shameful profession to support a dying wife and five hungry children. Being prepossessed against such falsehoods, his story had not the least influence upon me; but it was quite otherwise with the Man in Black: I could see it visibly operate upon his countenance, and effectually interrupt his harangue. I could easily perceive that his heart burned to relieve the five starving children, but he seemed ashamed to discover his weakness to me. While he thus hesitated between compassion and pride, I pretended to look another way, and he seized this opportunity of giving the poor petitioner a piece of silver, bidding him at the same time, in order that I should hear, go work for his bread, and not tease passengers with such impertinent falsehoods for the future.

As he had fancied himself quite unperceived, he continued, as we proceeded, to rail against beggars with as much animosity as before: he threw in some episodes on his own amazing prudence and economy, with his profound skill in discovering impostors; he explained the manner in which he would deal with beggars were he a magistrate, hinted at enlarging some of the prisons for their reception, and told two stories of ladies that were robbed by beggar-men. He was beginning a third to the same purpose, when a sailor with a wooden leg once more crossed our walks, desiring our pity, and blessing our limbs. I was for going on without taking any notice, but my friend, looking wistfully upon the poor petitioner, bid me stop, and he would show me with how much ease he could at any time detect an impostor.

He now, therefore, assumed a look of importance, and in an angry tone began to examine the sailor, demanding in what engagement he was thus disabled and rendered unfit for service. The sailor replied, in a tone as angrily as he, that he had been an officer on board a private ship of war, and that he had lost his leg abroad, in defence of those who did nothing at home. At this reply, all my friend's importance vanished in a moment: he had not a single question more to ask; he now only studied what method he should take to relieve him unobserved. He had, however, no easy part to act, as he was obliged to preserve the appearance of ill-nature before me, and yet relieve himself by relieving the sailor. Casting, therefore, a furious look upon some bundles of chips which the fellow carried in a string at his back, my friend demanded how he sold his matches; but, not waiting for a reply, desired, in a surly tone, to have a shilling's worth. The sailor seemed at first surprised at his demand, but soon recollecting himself, and presenting his whole bundle, "Here, master," says he, "take all my cargo, and a blessing into the bargain."

It is impossible to describe with what an air of triumph my friend marched off with his new purchase: he assured me, that he was firmly of opinion that those fellows must have stolen their goods, who could thus afford to sell them for half value. He informed me of several different uses to which those chips might be applied; he expatiated largely upon the savings that would result from lighting candles with a match, instead of thrusting them into

the fire. He averred, that he would as soon have parted with a tooth as his money to those vagabonds, unless for some valuable consideration. I cannot tell how long this panegyric upon frugality and matches might have continued, had not his attention been called off by another object more distressful than either of the former. A woman in rags, with one child in her arms, and another on her back, was attempting to sing ballads, but with such a mournful voice, that it was difficult to determine whether she was singing or crying. A wretch, who in the deepest distress still aimed at good-humour, was an object my friend was by no means capable of withstanding: his vivacity and his discourse were instantly interrupted; upon this occasion, his very dissimulation had forsaken him. Even in my presence he immediately applied his hands to his pockets, in order to relieve her; but guess his confusion when he found he had already given away all the money he carried about him to former objects. The misery painted in the woman's visage was not half so strongly expressed as the agony in his. He continued to search for some time, but to no purpose, till, at length recollecting himself, with a face of ineffable good-nature, as he had no money, he put into her hands his shilling's worth of matches.

XIV. HAPPINESS AND SHOW

*(Citizen of the World, No. 64)**To the same.*

THE princes of Europe have found out a manner of rewarding their subjects who have behaved well, by presenting them with about two yards of blue riband, which is worn about the shoulder. They who are honoured with this mark of distinction are called knights, and the king himself is always the head of the order. This is a very frugal method of recompensing the most important services; and it is very fortunate for kings that their subjects are satisfied with such trifling rewards. Should a nobleman happen to lose his leg in a battle, the king presents him with two yards of riband, and he is paid for the loss of his limb. Should an ambassador spend all his paternal fortune in supporting the honour of his country abroad, the king presents him with two yards of riband, which is to be considered as an equivalent to his estate. In short, while an European king has a yard of blue or green riband left, he need be under no apprehensions of wanting statesmen, generals and soldiers.

I cannot sufficiently admire those kingdoms in which men with large patrimonial estates are willing thus to undergo real hardships for empty favours. A person, already possessed of a competent fortune, who undertakes to enter the career of ambition feels many real inconveniences from his station, while it procures him no real happiness that he

was not possessed of before. He could eat, drink, and sleep, before he became a courtier, as well, perhaps better, than when invested with his authority. He could command flatterers in a private station, as well as in his public capacity, and indulge at home every favourite inclination, uncensured and unseen by the people.

What real good, then, does an addition to a fortune already sufficient procure? Not any. Could the great man by having his fortune increased, increase also his appetites, then precedence might be attended with real amusement.

Was he, by having his one thousand made two, thus enabled to enjoy two wives, or eat two dinners, then indeed he might be excused for undergoing some pain in order to extend the sphere of his enjoyments. But, on the contrary, he finds his desire for pleasure often lessen, as he takes pains to be able to improve it; and his capacity of enjoyment diminishes as his fortune happens to increase.

Instead, therefore, of regarding the great with envy, I generally consider them with some share of compassion. I look upon them as a set of good-natured, misguided people, who are indebted to us, and not to themselves, for all the happiness they enjoy. For our pleasure and not their own, they sweat under a cumbrous heap of finery; for our pleasure, the lackeyed train, the slow-parading pageant, with all the gravity of grandeur, moves in review: a single coat, or a single footman, answers all the purposes of the most indolent refinement as well; and those who have twenty, may be said to keep

one for their own pleasure, and the other nineteen merely for ours. So true is the observation of Confucius, "That we take greater pains to persuade others that we are happy, than in endeavouring to think so ourselves."

But though this desire of being seen, of being made the subject of discourse, and of supporting the dignities of an exalted station, be troublesome enough to the ambitious, yet it is well for society that there are men thus willing to exchange ease and safety for danger and a riband. We lose nothing by their vanity, and it would be unkind to endeavour to deprive a child of its rattle. If a duke or a duchess are willing to carry a long train for our entertainment, so much the worse for themselves; if they choose to exhibit in public, with a hundred lackeys and mamelukes in their equipage, for our entertainment, still so much the worse for themselves; it is the spectators alone who give and receive the pleasure; they only are the sweating figures that swell the pageant.

A mandarin, who took much pride in appearing with a number of jewels on every part of his robe, was once accosted by an old sly bonze, who, following him through several streets, and bowing often to the ground, thanked him for his jewels. "What does the man mean?" cried the mandarin. "Friend, I never gave thee any of my jewels." "No," replied the other; "but you have let me look at them, and that is all the use you can make of them yourself; so there is no difference between us except that you have the trouble of watching them, and that is an employment I don't much desire."—Adieu.

XV. A CITY NIGHT-PIECE

*(Citizen of the World, No. 117)**To the same.*

THE clock just struck two, the expiring taper rises and sinks in the socket, the watchman forgets the hour in slumber, the laborious and the happy are at rest, and nothing wakes but meditation, guilt, revelry, and despair. The drunkard once more fills the destroying bowl, the robber walks his midnight round, and the suicide lifts his guilty arm against his own sacred person.

Let me no longer waste the night over the page of antiquity, or the sallies of contemporary genius, but pursue the solitary walk where vanity, ever changing, but a few hours past walked before me; where she kept up the pageant, and now, like a froward child, seems hushed with her own importunities.

What a gloom hangs all around! The dying lamp feebly emits a yellow gleam; no sound is heard but of the chiming clock, or the distant watch-dog. All the bustle of human pride is forgotten; an hour like this may well display the emptiness of human vanity.

There will come a time, when this temporary solitude may be made continual, and the city itself, like its inhabitants, fade away and leave a desert in its room.

What cities as great as this have once triumphed in existence, had their victories as great, joy as just, and as unbounded; and, with short-sighted presumption, promised themselves immortality! Pos-

terity can hardly trace the situation of some; the sorrowful traveller wanders over the awful ruins of others; and, as he beholds, he learns wisdom, and feels the transience of every sublunary possession.

"Here," he cries, "stood their citadel, now grown over with weeds; there their senate house, but now the haunt of every noxious reptile; temples and theatres stood here, now only an undistinguished heap of ruin. They are fallen, for luxury and avarice first made them feeble. The rewards of the state were conferred on amusing and not on useful members of society. Their riches and opulence invited the invaders, who, though at first repulsed, returned again, conquered by perseverance, and at last swept the defendants into undistinguished destruction."

How few appear in those streets which but some few hours ago were crowded! and those who appear now no longer wear their daily mask, nor attempt to hide their lewdness or their misery.

But who are those that make the streets their couch, and find a short repose from wretchedness at the doors of the opulent? These are strangers, wanderers, and orphans, whose circumstances are too humble to expect redress, and whose distresses are too great even for pity. Their wretchedness excites rather horror than pity. Some are without the covering even of rags, and others emaciated with disease; the world has disclaimed them; society turns its back upon their distress, and has given them up to nakedness and hunger. These poor shivering females have once seen happier days, and been flattered into beauty. They have been prostituted

to the gay luxurious villain, and are now turned out to meet the severity of winter. Perhaps, now lying at the doors of their betrayers, they sue to wretches whose hearts are insensible, or debauchees who may curse, but will not relieve them.

Why, why was I born a man, and yet see the sufferings of wretches I cannot relieve? Poor houseless creatures! the world will give you reproaches, but will not give you relief. The slightest misfortunes of the great, the most imaginary uneasiness of the rich, are aggravated with all the power of eloquence, and held up to engage our attention and sympathetic sorrow. The poor weep unheeded, persecuted by every subordinate species of tyranny; and every law which gives others security, becomes an enemy to them.

Why was this heart of mine formed with so much sensibility? or why was not my fortune adapted to its impulse? Tenderness, without a capacity of relieving, only makes the man who feels it more wretched than the object which sues for assistance. —Adieu.

XVI. NATIONAL PREJUDICES

(*Essays*, No. 11)

As I am one of that sauntering tribe of mortals who spend the greatest part of their time in taverns, coffee-houses, and other places of public resort, I have thereby an opportunity of observing an infinite variety of characters, which to a person of a contemplative turn is a much higher entertainment

than a view of all the curiosities of art or nature. In one of these my late rambles I accidentally fell into a company of half a dozen gentlemen, who were engaged in a warm dispute about some political affair, the decision of which, as they were equally divided in their sentiments, they thought proper to refer to me, which naturally drew me in for a share of the conversation.

Amongst a multiplicity of other topics, we took occasion to talk of the different characters of the several nations of Europe; when one of the gentlemen, cocking his hat, and assuming such an air of importance as if he had possessed all the merit of the English nation in his own person, declared, that the Dutch were a parcel of avaricious wretches; the French a set of flattering sycophants; that the Germans were drunken sots, and beastly gluttons; and the Spaniards, proud, haughty, and surly tyrants; but that in bravery, generosity, clemency, and in every other virtue, the English excelled all the world.

This very learned and judicious remark was received with a general smile of approbation by all the company—all, I mean, but your humble servant, who, endeavouring to keep my gravity as well as I could, and reclining my head upon my arm, continued for some time in a posture of affected thoughtfulness, as if I had been musing on something else, and did not seem to attend to the subject of conversation; hoping by this means to avoid the disagreeable necessity of explaining myself, and thereby depriving the gentleman of his imaginary happiness.

But my pseudo-patriot had no mind to let me escape so easily. Not satisfied that his opinion should pass without contradiction, he was determined to have it ratified by the suffrage of every one in the company; for which purpose, addressing himself to me with an air of inexpressible confidence, he asked me if I was not of the same way of thinking. As I am never forward in giving my opinion, especially when I have reason to believe that it will not be agreeable; so, when I am obliged to give it, I always hold it for a maxim to speak my real sentiments. I therefore told him that, for my own part, I should not have ventured to talk in such a peremptory strain unless I had made the tour of Europe, and examined the manners of these several nations with great care and accuracy; that perhaps a more impartial judge would not scruple to affirm, that the Dutch were more frugal and industrious, the French more temperate and polite, the Germans more hardy and patient of labour and fatigue, and the Spaniards more staid and sedate, than the English; who, though undoubtedly brave and generous, were at the same time rash, headstrong, and impetuous; too apt to be elated with prosperity, and to despond in adversity.

I could easily perceive that all the company began to regard me with a jealous eye before I had finished my answer, which I had no sooner done, than the patriotic gentleman observed, with a contemptuous sneer, that he was greatly surprised how some people could have the conscience to live in a country which they did not love, and to enjoy the protection of a government to which in their hearts they were inve-

rate enemies. Finding that by this modest declaration of my sentiments I had forfeited the good opinion of my companions, and given them occasion to call my political principles in question, and well knowing that it was in vain to argue with men who were so very full of themselves, I threw down my reckoning and retired to my own lodgings, reflecting on the absurd and ridiculous nature of national prejudice and prepossession.

Among all the famous sayings of antiquity, there is none that does greater honour to the author, or affords greater pleasure to the reader (at least if he be a person of a generous and benevolent heart), than that of the philosopher who, being asked what countryman he was, replied that he was "a citizen of the world." How few are there to be found in modern times who can say the same, or whose conduct is consistent with such a profession! We are now become so much Englishmen, Frenchmen, Dutchmen, Spaniards, or Germans, that we are no longer citizens of the world; so much the natives of one particular spot, or members of one petty society, that we no longer consider ourselves as the general inhabitants of the globe, or members of that grand society which comprehends the whole human kind.

Did these prejudices prevail only among the meanest and lowest of the people, perhaps they might be excused, as they have few, if any, opportunities of correcting them by reading, travelling, or conversing with foreigners: but the misfortune is that they infect the minds, and influence the conduct, even of our gentlemen; of those, I mean, who have

every title to this appellation but an exemption from prejudice, which, however, in my opinion, ought to be regarded as the characteristical mark of a gentleman ; for let a man's birth be ever so high, his station ever so exalted, or his fortune ever so large, yet if he is not free from national and other prejudices, I should make bold to tell him, that he had a low and vulgar mind, and had no just claim to the character of a gentleman. And, in fact, you will always find that those are most apt to boast of national merit, who have little or no merit of their own to depend on ; than which, to be sure, nothing is more natural : the slender vine twists around the sturdy oak, for no other reason in the world but because it has not strength sufficient to support itself.

Should it be alleged in defence of national prejudice, that it is the natural and necessary growth of love to our country, and that therefore the former cannot be destroyed without hurting the latter, I answer that this is a gross fallacy and delusion. That it is the growth of love to our country, I will allow ; but that it is the natural and necessary growth of it, I absolutely deny. Superstition and enthusiasm, too, are the growth of religion ; but who ever took it in his head to affirm, that they are the necessary growth of this noble principle ? They are, if you will, the bastard sprouts of this heavenly plant, but not its natural and genuine branches, and may safely enough be lopped off, without doing any harm to the parent stock : nay, perhaps, till once they are lopped off, this goodly tree can never flourish in perfect health and vigour.

Is it not very possible that I may love my own country, without hating the natives of other countries? that I may exert the most heroic bravery, the most undaunted resolution, in defending its laws and liberty, without despising all the rest of the world as cowards and poltroons? Most certainly it is; and if it were not—But why need I suppose what is absolutely impossible?—But if it were not, I must own I should prefer the title of the ancient philosopher, viz., a citizen of the world, to that of an Englishman, a Frenchman, an European, or to any other appellation whatever.

XVII. INDEPENDENCE

(Civitas of the World, No. 100)

From Lien Chi Allangi to Hingpo, by the way of Moscow.

Few virtues have been more praised by moralists than generosity: every practical treatise of ethics tends to increase our sensibility of the distresses of others, and to relax the grasp of frugality. Philosophers that are poor praise it, because they are gainers by its effects: and the opulent Seneca himself has written a treatise on benefits, though he was known to give nothing away.

But among many who have enforced the duty of giving, I am surprised there are none to inculcate the ignominy of receiving: to show that by every favour we accept we in some measure forfeit our native freedom; and that a state of continual depend-

ence on the generosity of others is a life of gradual debasement.

Were men taught to despise the receiving obligations with the same force of reasoning and declamation that they are instructed to confer them, we might then see every person in society filling up the requisite duties of his station with cheerful industry, neither relaxed by hope, nor sullen from disappointment.

Every favour a man receives in some measure sinks him below his dignity ; and, in proportion to the value of the benefit, or the frequency of its acceptance, he gives up so much of his natural independence. He, therefore, who thrives upon the unmerited bounty of another, if he has any sensibility, suffers the worst of servitude : the shackled slave may murmur without reproach, but the humble dependant is taxed with ingratitude upon every symptom of discontent ; the one may rave round the walls of his cell, but the other lingers in all the silence of mental confinement. To increase his distress, every new obligation but adds to the former load, which kept the vigorous mind from rising ; till at last, elastic no longer, it shapes itself to constraint, and puts on habitual servility.

It is thus with a feeling mind : but there are some who, born without any share of sensibility, receive favour after favour, and still cringe for more ; who accept the offer of generosity with as little reluctance as the wages of merit, and even make thanks for past benefits an indirect petition for new : such, I grant, can suffer no debasement from dependence, since they were originally as vile as was possible

to be; dependence degrades only the ingenuous, but leaves the sordid mind in pristine meanness. In this manner, therefore, long continued generosity is misplaced, or it is injurious. it either finds a man worthless, or it makes him so: and true it is, that the person who is contented to be often obliged, ought not to have been obliged at all.

Yet, while I describe the meanness of a life of continued dependence, I would not be thought to include those natural or political subordinations which subsist in every society: for in such, though dependence is exacted from the inferior, yet the obligation on either side is mutual. The son must rely upon his parent for support, but the parent lies under the same obligations to give that the other has to expect; the subordinate officer must receive the commands of his superior, but for this obedience the former has a right to demand an intercourse of favour. Such is not the dependence I would deprecate, but that where every expected favour must be the result of mere benevolence in the giver, where the benefit can be kept without remorse, or transferred without injustice. The character of a legacy hunter, for instance, is detestable in some countries, and despicable in all: this universal contempt of a man who infringes upon none of the laws of society some moralists have arraigned as a popular and unjust prejudice: never considering the necessary degradations a wretch must undergo, who previously expects to grow rich by benefits, without having either natural or social claims to enforce his petitions.

But this intercourse of benefaction and acknowledgement is often injurious even to the giver, as well as the receiver. A man can gain but little knowledge of himself, or of the world, amidst a circle of those whom hope or gratitude has gathered round him ; their unceasing humiliations must necessarily increase his comparative magnitude, for all men measure their own abilities by those of their company : thus being taught to overrate his merit, he in reality lessens it ; increasing in confidence, but not in power, his professions end in empty boast, his undertakings in shameful disappointment.

It is perhaps one of the severest misfortunes of the great, that they are, in general, obliged to live among men whose real value is lessened by dependence, and whose minds are enslaved by obligation. The humble companion may have at first accepted patronage with generous views ; but soon he feels the mortifying influence of conscious inferiority, by degrees sinks into a flatterer, and from flattery at last degenerates into stupid veneration. To remedy this, the great often dismiss their old dependants and take new. Such changes are falsely imputed to levity, falsehood, or caprice in the patron, since they may be more justly ascribed to the client's deterioration.

No, my son, a life of independence is generally a life of virtue. It is that which fits the soul for every generous flight of humanity, freedom, and friendship. To give should be our pleasure, but to receive our shame : serenity, health and affluence attend the desire of rising by labour ; misery, repentance,

and disrespect, that of succeeding by extorted benevolence : the man who can thank himself alone for the happiness he enjoys is truly blest ; and lovely, far more lovely, the sturdy gloom of laborious indigence, than the fawning simper of thriving adulation —Adieu.

WILLIAM HAZLITT

XVIII. ON GOING A JOURNEY

(Table Talk, 212)

ONE of the pleasantest things in the world is going a journey ; but I like to go by myself. I can enjoy society in a room ; but out of doors, nature is company enough for me. I am then never less alone than when alone.

“The fields his study, nature was his book.”

I cannot see the wit of walking and talking at the same time. When I am in the country, I wish to vegetate like the country. I am not for criticising hedge-rows and black cattle. I go out of town in order to forget the town and all that is in it. There are those who for this purpose go to watering-places, and carry the metropolis with them. I like more elbow-room, and fewer encumbrances. I like solitude, when I give myself up to it, for the sake of solitude ; nor do I ask for

“——a friend in my retreat,
Whom I may whisper, solitude is sweet.”

The soul of a journey is liberty, perfect liberty, to think, feel, do, just as one pleases. We go a journey chiefly to be free of all impediments and of all

inconveniences; to leave ourselves behind, much more to get rid of others. It is because I want a little breathing space to muse on different matters, where Contemplation

" May plume her feathers and let grow her wings,
That in the various bustle of resort
Were all too ruffled, and sometimes impair'd,"

that I absent myself from the town for a while, without feeling at a loss the moment I am left by myself. Instead of a friend in a post-chaise or in a Tilbury, to exchange good things with and vary the same stale topics over again, for once let me have a truce with impertinence. Give me the clear blue sky over my head, and the green turf beneath my feet, a winding road before me, and a three hours' march to dinner—and then to thinking! It is hard if I cannot start some game on these lone heaths. I laugh, I run, I leap, I sing for joy. From the point of yonder rolling cloud, I plunge into my past being, and revel there, as the sun-burnt Indian plunges headlong into the wave that wafts him to his native shore. Then long-forgotten things, like "sunken wrack and sunless treasures," burst upon my eager sight, and I begin to feel, think, and be myself again. Instead of an awkward silence, broken by attempts at wit or dull commonplaces, mine is that undisturbed silence of the heart which alone is perfect eloquence. No one likes puns, alliterations, antitheses, argument, and analysis better than I do; but I sometimes had rather be without them. "Leave, oh leave me to my repose!" I have just now other business in hand, which would seem idle to you,

but is with me "very stuff o' the conscience." Is not this wild rose sweet without a comment? Does not this daisy leap to my heart set in its coat of emerald? Yet if I were to explain to you the circumstance that has so endeared it to me, you would only smile. Had I not better then keep it to myself, and let it serve me to brood over, from here to yonder craggy point, and from thence onward to the far-distant horizon? I should be but bad company all that way, and therefore prefer being alone. I have heard it said that you may, when the moody fit comes on, walk or ride on by yourself, and indulge your reveries. But this looks like a breach of manners, a neglect of others, and you are thinking all the time that you ought to rejoin your party. "Out upon such half-faced fellowship," say I. I like to be either entirely to myself, or entirely at the disposal of others; to talk or be silent, to walk or sit still, to be sociable or solitary. I was pleased with an observation of Mr. Cobbett's, that "he thought it a bad French custom to drink our wine with our meals, and that an Englishman ought to do only one thing at a time." So I cannot talk and think, or indulge in melancholy musing and lively conversation by fits and starts. "Let me have a companion of my way," says Sterne, "were it but to remark how the shadows lengthen as the sun declines." It is beautifully said; but in my opinion, this continual comparing of notes interferes with the voluntary impression of things upon the mind, and hurts the sentiment. If you only hint what you feel in a kind of dumb show, it is insipid: if you have to

explain it, it is making a toil of a pleasure. You cannot read the book of nature without being perpetually put to the trouble of translating it for the benefit of others. I am for this synthetical method on a journey in preference to the analytical. I am content to lay in a stock of ideas then, and to examine and anatomise them afterwards. I want to see my vague notions float like the down of the thistle before the breeze, and not to have them entangled in the briars and thorns of controversy. For once, I like to have it all my own way; and this is impossible unless you are alone, or in such company as I do not covet. I have no objection to argue a point with any one for twenty miles of measured road, but not for pleasure. If you remark the scent of a bean-field crossing the road, perhaps your fellow-traveller has no smell. If you point to a distant object, perhaps he is short-sighted, and has to take out his glass to look at it. There is a feeling in the air, a tone in the colour of a cloud which hits your fancy, but the effect of which you are unable to account for. There is then no sympathy, but an uneasy craving after it, and a dissatisfaction which pursues you on the way, and in the end probably produces ill-humour. Now, I never quarrel with myself, and take all my own conclusions for granted till I find it necessary to defend them against objections. It is not merely that you may not be of accord on the objects and circumstances that present themselves before you—these may recall a number of objects, and lead to associations too delicate and refined to be possibly communicated to others. Yet

these I love to cherish, and sometimes still fondly clutch them, when I can escape from the throng to do so. To give way to our feelings before company seems extravagance or affectation ; and, on the other hand, to have to unravel this mystery of our being at every turn, and to make others take an equal interest in it (otherwise the end is not answered), is a task to which few are competent. We must "give it an understanding, but no tongue." My old friend Coleridge, however, could do both. He could go on in the most delightful explanatory way over hill and dale a summer's day, and convert a landscape into a didactic poem or a Pindaric ode. "He talked far above singing." If I could so clothe my ideas in sounding and flowing words, I might perhaps *wish to have some one with me to admire the swelling theme* ; or I could be more content, were it possible for me still to hear his echoing voice in the woods of All-Foxden.

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Had I words and images at command, I would attempt to wake the thoughts that lie slumbering on golden ridges in the evening clouds : but at the sight of nature my fancy, poor as it is, droops and closes up its leaves, like flowers at sunset. I can make nothing out on the spot : I must have time to collect myself.

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There is hardly anything that shows the short-sightedness or capriciousness of the imagination more than travelling does. With change of place we change our ideas ; nay, our opinions and feelings. We can

by an effort indeed transport ourselves to old and long-forgotten scenes, and then the picture of the mind revives again; but we forget those that we have just left. It seems that we can think but of one place at a time. The canvas of the fancy is but of a certain extent, and if we paint one set of objects upon it, they immediately efface every other. We cannot enlarge our conceptions, we only shift our point of view. The landscape bares its bosom to the enraptured eye, we take our fill of it, and seem as if we could form no other image of beauty or grandeur. We pass on, and think no more of it; the horizon that shuts it from our sight also blots it from our memory like a dream. In travelling through a wild, barren country, I can form no idea of a woody and cultivated one. It appears to me that all the world must be barren, like what I see of it. In the country we forget the town, and in town we despise the country. "Beyond Hyde Park," says Sir Fopling Flutter, "all is a desert." All that part of the map that we do not see before us is blank. The world in our conceit of it is not much bigger than a nutshell. It is not one prospect expanded into another, county joined to county, kingdom to kingdom, land to seas, making an image voluminous and vast;—the mind can form no larger idea of space than the eye can take in at a single glance. The rest is a name written in a map, a calculation of arithmetic. For instance, what is the true signification of that immense mass of territory and population, known by the name of China to us? An inch of pasteboard on a wooden globe, of no more account

than a China orange ! Things near us are seen of the size of life : things at a distance are diminished to the size of the understanding. We measure the universe by ourselves, and even comprehend the texture of our own being only piecemeal. In this way, however, we remember an infinity of things and places. The mind is like a mechanical instrument that plays a great variety of tunes, but it must play them in succession. One idea recalls another, but it at the same time excludes all others. In trying to renew old recollections, we cannot as it were unfold the whole web of our existence ; we must pick out the single threads. So in coming to a place where we have formerly lived, and with which we have intimate associations, every one must have found that the feeling grows more vivid the nearer we approach the spot, from the mere anticipation of the actual impression : we remember circumstances, feelings, persons, faces, names that we had not thought of for years ; but for the time all the rest of the world is forgotten !—To return to the question I have quitted above :—

I have no objection to go to see ruins, aqueducts, pictures, in company with a friend or a party, but rather the contrary, for the former reason reversed. They are intelligible matters, and will bear talking about. The sentiment here is not tacit, but communicable and overt. Salisbury Plain is barren of criticism, but Stonehenge will bear a discussion antiquarian, picturesque, and philosophical. In setting out on a party of pleasure, the first consideration always is where we shall go to : in taking a solitary

ramble, the question is what we shall meet with by the way. "The mind is its own place;" nor are we anxious to arrive at the end of our journey. I can myself do the honours indifferently well to works of art and curiosity. I once took a party to Oxford with no mean *éclat*—showed them that seat of the Muses at a distance

"With glistening spires and pinnacles adorn'd"—

descanted on the learned air that breathes from the grassy quadrangles and stone walls of halls and colleges—was at home in the Bodleian; and at Blenheim quite superseded the powdered Cicerone that attended us, and that pointed in vain with his wand to commonplace beauties in matchless pictures. As another exception to the above reasoning, I should not feel confident in venturing on a journey in a foreign country without a companion. I should want at intervals to hear the sound of my own language. There is an involuntary antipathy in the mind of an Englishman to foreign manners and notions that requires the assistance of social sympathy to carry it off. As the distance from home increases, this relief, which was at first a luxury, becomes a passion and an appetite. A person would almost feel stifled to find himself in the deserts of Arabia without friends and countrymen: there must be allowed to be something in the view of Athens or old Rome that claims the utterance of speech; and I own that the Pyramids are too mighty for any single contemplation. In such situations, so opposite to all one's ordinary train of ideas, one seems a species

by one's-self, a limb torn off from society, unless one can meet with instant fellowship and support. Yet I did not feel this want or craving very pressing once, when I first set my foot on the laughing shores of France. Calais was peopled with novelty and delight. The confused, busy murmur of the place was like oil and wine poured into my ears; nor did the Mariners' Hymn, which was sung from the top of an old crazy vessel in the harbour, as the sun went down, send an alien sound into my soul. I only breathed the air of general humanity. I walked over "the vine-covered hills and gay regions of France," erect and satisfied; for the image of man was not cast down and chained to the foot of arbitrary thrones: I was at no loss for language, for that of all the great schools of painting was open to me. The whole is vanished like a shade. Pictures, heroes, glory, freedom, all are fled: nothing remains but the Bourbons and the French people!—There is undoubtedly a sensation in travelling into foreign parts that is to be had nowhere else: but it is more pleasing at the time than lasting. It is too remote from our habitual associations to be a common topic of discourse or reference, and, like a dream of another state of existence, does not piece into our daily modes of life. It is an animated but a momentary hallucination. It demands an effort to exchange our actual for our ideal identity; and to feel the pulse of our old transports revive very keenly, we must "jump" all our present comforts and connections. Our romantic and itinerant character is not to be domesticated. Dr. Johnson remarked how little foreign travel

added to the facilities of conversation in those who had been abroad. In fact, the time we have spent there is both delightful, and, in one sense, instructive ; but it appears to be cut out of our substantial, down-right existence, and never to join kindly on to it. We are not the same, but another, and perhaps more enviable individual, all the time we are out of our own country. We are lost to ourselves, as well as our friends. So the poet somewhat quaintly sings,

“Out of my country and myself I go.”

Those who wish to forget painful thoughts, do well to absent themselves for a while from the ties and objects that recall them : but we can be said only to fulfil our destiny in the place that gave us birth. I should on this account like well enough to spend the whole of my life in travelling abroad, if I could anywhere borrow another life to spend afterwards at home !

XIX. THE CONDUCT OF LIFE

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THERE is one almost certain drawback on a course of scholastic study, that it unfits men for active life. The *ideal* is always at variance with the *practical*. The habit of fixing the attention on the imaginary and abstracted deprives the mind equally of energy and fortitude. By indulging our imaginations on fictions and chimeras, where we have it all our own way and are led on only by the pleasure of the prospect, we grow fastidious, effeminate, lapped in idle

luxury, impatient of contradiction, and unable to sustain the shock of real adversity when it comes; as by being taken up with abstract reasoning or remote events in which we are merely passive spectators, we have no resources to provide against it, no readiness, or expedients for the occasion, or spirit to use them, even if they occur. We must think again before we determine, and thus the opportunity for action is lost. While we are considering the very best possible mode of gaining an object, we find that it has slipped through our fingers, or that others have laid rude, fearless hands upon it. The youthful tyro reluctantly discovers that the ways of the world are not his ways, nor their thoughts his thoughts. Perhaps the old monastic institutions were not in this respect unwise, which carried on to the end of life the secluded habits and romantic associations with which it began, and which created a privileged world for the inhabitants, distinct from the common world of men and women. You will bring with you from your books and solitary reveries a wrong measure of men and things, unless you correct it by careful experience and mixed observation. You will raise your standard of character as much too high at first as from disappointed expectation it will sink too low afterwards. The best qualifier of this theoretical *mania* and of the dreams of poets and moralists (who both treat of things as *they ought to be* and not as *they are*) is in one sense to be found in some of our own popular writers, such as our Novelists and periodical Essayists. But you had, after all, better wait and see what things are, than

try to anticipate the results. You know more of a road by having travelled it than by all the conjectures and descriptions in the world. You will find the business of life conducted on a much more varied and individual scale than you would expect. People will be concerned about a thousand things that you have no idea of, and will be utterly indifferent to what you feel the greatest interest in. You will find good and evil, folly and discretion, more mingled, and the shades of character running more into each other than they do in the ethical charts. No one is equally wise or guarded at all points, and it is seldom that any one is quite a fool. Do not be surprised, when you go out into the world, to find men talk exceedingly well on different subjects, who do not derive their information immediately from books. In the first place, the light of books is diffused very much abroad in the world in conversation and at second-hand: and besides, common sense is not a monopoly, and experience and observation are sources of information open to the man of the world as well as to the retired student. If you know more of the outline and principles, he knows more of the details and "*pratique* part of life." A man may discuss very agreeably the adventures of a campaign in which he was engaged without having read the "*Retreat of the Ten Thousand*," or give a singular account of the method of drying teas in China without being a profound chemist. It is the vice of scholars to suppose that there is no knowledge in the world but that of books. Do you avoid it, I conjure you; and thereby save yourself the pain and mortification

that must otherwise ensue from finding out your mistake continually !

Gravity is one great ingredient in the conduct of life, and perhaps a certain share of it is hardly to be dispensed with. Few people can afford to be quite unaffected. At any rate, do not put your worst qualities foremost. Do not seek to distinguish yourself by being ridiculous ; nor entertain that miserable ambition to be the sport and butt of the company. By aiming at a certain standard of behaviour or intellect, you will at least show your taste and value for what is excellent. There are those who *blurt* out their good things with so little heed of what they are about that no one thinks anything of them ; as others by keeping their folly to themselves gain the reputation of wisdom. Do not, however, affect to speak only in oracles, or to deal in *bon-mots* ; condescend to the level of the company, and be free and accessible to all persons. Express whatever occurs to you, that cannot offend others or hurt yourself. Keep some opinions to yourself. Say what you please of others, but never repeat what you hear said of them to themselves. If you have nothing yourself to offer, laugh with the witty—assent to the wise : they will not think the worse of you for it. Listen to information on subjects you are acquainted with, instead of always striving to lead the conversation to some favourite one of your own. By the last method you will shine, but will not improve. I am ashamed myself ever to open my lips on any question I have ever written upon. It is much more difficult to be able to converse on.

an equality with a number of persons in turn, than to soar above their heads, and excite the stupid gaze of all companies by bestriding some senseless topic of your own and confounding the understandings of those who are ignorant of it. Be not too fond of argument. Indeed, by going much into company (which I do not, however, wish you to do) you will be weaned from this practice, if you set out with it. Rather suggest what remarks may have occurred to you on a subject than aim at dictating your opinions to others or at defending yourself at all points. You will learn more by agreeing in the main with others and entering into their trains of thinking, than by contradicting and urging them to extremities. Avoid singularity of opinion as well as of everything else. Sound conclusions come with practical knowledge, rather than with speculative refinements: in what we really understand, we reason but little. Long-winded disputes fill up the place of common-sense and candid inquiry. Do not imagine that you will make people friends by showing your superiority over them: it is what they will neither admit nor forgive, unless you have a high and acknowledged reputation beforehand, which renders this sort of petty vanity more inexcusable. Seek to gain the good-will of others rather than to extort their applause; and to this end, be neither too tenacious of your own claims, nor inclined to press too hard on their weaknesses.

Do not affect the society of your superiors in rank, nor court that of the great. There can be no real sympathy in either case. The first will consider

you as a restraint upon them, and the last as an intruder, or *upon sufferance*. It is not a desirable distinction to be admitted into company as a man of talents. You are a mark for invidious observation. If you say nothing, or merely behave with common propriety and simplicity, you seem to have no business there. If you make a studied display of yourself, it is arrogating a consequence you have no right to. If you are contented to pass as an indifferent person, they despise you ; if you distinguish yourself, and show more knowledge, wit, or taste than they do, they hate you for it. You have no alternative. I would rather be asked to sing than to talk. Everyone does not pretend to a fine voice, but everyone fancies he has as much understanding as another. Indeed, the secret of this sort of intercourse has been pretty well found out. Literary men are seldom invited to the tables of the great ; they send for players and musicians, as they keep monkeys and parrots !

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XX. MECHANICAL PERFECTION

(From "*The Indian Jugglers*," *Table Talk* ix)

COMING forward and seating himself on the ground in his white dress and tightened turban, the chief of the Indian Jugglers begins with tossing up two brass balls, which is what any of us could do, and concludes with keeping up four at the same time, which is what none of us could do to save our lives, nor if we were to take our whole lives to do it in.

Is it then a trifling power we see at work, or is it not something next to miraculous? It is the utmost stretch of human ingenuity, which nothing but the bending the faculties of body and mind to it from the tenderest infancy with incessant, ever anxious application up to manhood can accomplish or make even a slight approach to. Man, thou art a wonderful animal, and thy ways are past finding out! Thou canst do strange things, but thou turnest them to little account!—To conceive of this effort of extraordinary dexterity distracts the imagination and makes admiration breathless. Yet it costs nothing to the performer, any more than if it were a mere mechanical deception with which he had nothing to do but to watch and laugh at the astonishment of the spectators. A single error of a hair's breadth, of the smallest conceivable portion of time, would be fatal: the precision of the movements must be like a mathematical truth, their rapidity is like lightning. To catch four balls in succession in less than a second of time, and deliver them back so as to return with seeming consciousness to the hand again, to make them revolve round him at certain intervals, like the planets in their spheres, to make them chase one another like sparkles of fire, or shoot up like flowers or meteors, to throw them behind his back and twine them round his neck like ribbons or like serpents, to do what appears an impossibility, and to do it with all the ease, the grace, the carelessness imaginable, to laugh at, to play with the glittering mockeries, to follow them with his eye as if he could fascinate them with its lambent fire, or as if he had

only to see that they kept time with the music on the stage—there is something in all this which he who does not admire may be quite sure he never really admired anything in the whole course of his life. It is skill surmounting difficulty, and beauty triumphing over skill. It seems as if the difficulty once mastered naturally resolved itself into ease and grace; and as if to be overcome at all, it must be overcome without an effort. The smallest awkwardness or want of pliancy or self-possession would stop the whole process. It is the work of witchcraft, and yet sport for children. Some of the other feats are quite as curious and wonderful, such as the balancing the artificial tree and shooting a bird from each branch through a quill; though none of them have the elegance or facility of the keeping up of the brass balls. You are in pain for the result and glad when the experiment is over; they are not accompanied with the same unmixed, unchecked delight as the former; and I would not give much to be merely astonished without being pleased at the same time. As to the swallowing of the sword, the police ought to interfere to prevent it. When I saw the Indian Juggler do the same things before, his feet were bare, and he had large rings on his toes, which kept turning round all the time of the performance, as if they moved of themselves.—The hearing a speech in Parliament, drawled or stammered out by the Honourable Member or the Noble Lord, the ringing the changes on their commonplaces, which any one could repeat after them as well as they, stir me not a jot, shake not my good opinion of myself; but the seeing the Indian

Jugglers does. It makes me ashamed of myself. I ask what there is that I can do as well as this? Nothing. What have I been doing all my life? Have I been idle, or have I nothing to show for all my labour and pains? Or have I passed my time in pouring words like water into empty sieves, rolling a stone up a hill and then down again, trying to prove an argument in the teeth of facts, and looking for causes in the dark, and not finding them? Is there no one thing in which I can challenge competition, that I can bring as an instance of exact perfection, in which others cannot find a flaw? The utmost I can pretend to is to write a description of what this fellow can do, I can write a book so can many others who have not even learnt to spell. What abortions are these Essays! What errors, what ill-pieced transitions, what crooked reasons, what lame conclusions! How little is made out, and that little how ill! Yet they are the best I can do. I endeavour to recollect all I have ever observed or thought upon a subject, and to express it as nearly as I can. Instead of writing on four subjects at a time, it is as much as I can manage to keep the thread of one discourse clear and unentangled. I have also time on my hands to correct my opinions, and polish my periods: but the one I cannot, and the other I will not do. I am fond of arguing: yet with a good deal of pains and practice it is often as much as I can do to beat my man; though he may be an indifferent hand. A common fencer would disarm his adversary in the twinkling of an eye, unless he were a professor like himself. A stroke

of wit will sometimes produce this effect, but there is no such power or superiority in sense or reasoning. There is no complete mastery of execution to be shown there: and you hardly know the professor from the impudent pretender or the mere clown.¹

I have always had this feeling of the inefficacy and slow progress of intellectual compared to mechanical excellence, and it has always made me somewhat dissatisfied. It is a great many years since I saw Richer, the famous rope-dancer, perform at Sadler's Wells. He was matchless in his art, and added to his extraordinary skill exquisite ease, and unaffected, natural grace. I was at that time employed in copying a half-length picture of Sir Joshua Reynolds's; and it put me out of conceit with it. How ill this part was made out in the drawing! How heavy, how slovenly this other was painted! I could not help saying to myself, "If the rope-dancer had performed his task in this manner, leaving so many gaps and botches in his work, he would have broken his neck long ago; I should never have

¹ The celebrated Peter Pindar (Dr. Wolcot) first discovered and brought out the talents of the late Mr. Opie, the painter. He was a poor Cornish boy, and was out at work in the fields, when the poet went in search of him. "Well, my lad, can you go and bring me your very best picture?" The other flew like lightning, and soon came back with what he considered as his masterpiece. The stranger looked at it, and the young artist, after waiting for some time without his giving any opinion, at length exclaimed eagerly, "Well, what do you think of it?"—"Think of it?" said Wolcot, "why, I think you ought to be ashamed of it—that you who might do so well, do no better!" The same answer would have applied to this artist's latest performances, that had been suggested by one of his earliest efforts.

seen that vigorous elasticity of nerve and precision of movement!"—Is it then so easy an undertaking, (comparatively) to dance on a tight-rope? Let anyone who thinks so get up and try. There is the thing. It is that which at first we cannot do at all, which in the end is done to such perfection. To account for this in some degree, I might observe that mechanical dexterity is confined to doing some one particular thing, which you can repeat as often as you please, in which you know whether you succeed or fail, and where the point of perfection consists in succeeding in a given undertaking. In mechanical efforts, you improve by perpetual practice, and you do so infallibly, because the object to be obtained is not a matter of taste or fancy or opinion, but of actual experiment, in which you must either do the thing or not do it. If a man is put to aim at a mark with a bow and arrow, he must hit it or miss it, that's certain. He cannot deceive himself, and go on shooting wide or falling short, and still fancy that he is making progress. The distinction between right and wrong, between true and false, is here palpable; and he must either correct his aim or persevere in his error with his eyes open, for which there is neither excuse nor temptation. If a man is learning to dance on a rope, if he does not mind what he is about, he will break his neck. After that it will be in vain for him to argue that he did not make a false step. His situation is not like that of Goldsmith's pedagogue:—

"In argument they own'd his wondrous skill,
And e'en though vanquish'd, he could argue still."

Danger is a good teacher, and makes apt scholars. So are disgrace, defeat, exposure to immediate scorn and laughter. There is no opportunity in such cases for self-delusion, no idling time away, no being off your guard (or you must take the consequences) —neither is there any room for humour or caprice or prejudice. If the Indian Juggler were to play tricks in throwing up the three case-knives, which keep their positions like the leaves of a crocus in the air, he would cut his fingers. I can make a very bad antithesis without cutting my fingers. The tact of style is more ambiguous than that of double-edged instruments. If the Juggler were told that by flinging himself under the wheels of the Juggernaut, when the idol issues forth on a gaudy day, he would immediately be transported into Paradise, he might believe it, and nobody could disprove it. So the Brahmins may say what they please on that subject, may build up dogmas and mysteries without end, and not be detected; but their ingenious countryman cannot persuade the frequenters of the Olympic Theatre that he performs a number of astonishing feats without actually giving proofs of what he says.—There is then in this sort of manual dexterity, first a gradual aptitude acquired to a given exertion of muscular power, from constant repetition, and in the next place, an exact knowledge how much is still wanting and necessary to be supplied. The obvious test is to increase the effort or nicety of the operation, and still to find it come true. The muscles ply instinctively to the dictates of habit. Certain movements and impressions of the hand and eye,

having been repeated together an infinite number of times, are unconsciously but unavoidably cemented into closer and closer union; the limbs require little more than to be put in motion for them to follow a regular track with ease and certainty; so that the mere intention of the will acts mathematically like touching the spring of a machine, and you come with Locksley in *Ivanhoe*, in shooting at a mark, "to allow for the wind."

Farther, what is meant by perfection in mechanical exercises is the performing certain feats to a uniform nicety, that is, in fact, undertaking no more than you can perform. You task yourself, the limit you fix is optional, and no more than human industry and skill can attain to; but you have no abstract, independent standard of difficulty or excellence (other than the extent of your own powers). Thus he who can keep up four brass balls does this *to perfection*; but he cannot keep up five at the same instant, and would fail every time he attempted it. That is, the mechanical performer undertakes to emulate himself, not to equal another.¹ But the artist undertakes to imitate another or to do what nature has done, and this it appears is more difficult—viz., to copy what she has set before us in the face of nature or "human face divine," entire and without a blemish, than to keep up four brass balls at the same instant, for the one is done by the power of human skill and industry, and the other never was nor will be. Upon the whole, therefore, I have more

¹ If two persons play against each other at any game, one of them necessarily fails.

respect for Reynolds than I have for Richer ; for, happen how it will, there have been more people in the world who could dance on a rope like the one than who could paint like Sir Joshua. The latter was but a bungler in his profession to the other, it is true ; but then he had a harder taskmaster to obey, whose will was more wayward and obscure, and whose instructions it was more difficult to practise. You can put a child apprentice to a tumbler or rope dancer with a comfortable prospect of success, if they are but sound of wind and limb ; but you cannot do the same thing in painting. The odds are a million to one. You may make indeed as many Haydons and H—s as you put into that sort of machine, but not one Reynolds amongst them all, with his grace, his grandeur, his blandness of *gusto*, “ in tones and gestures hit,” unless you could make the man over again. To snatch this grace beyond the reach of art is then the height of art—where fine art begins, and where mechanical skill ends. .

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XXI. THE SICK CHAMBER

(*The New Monthly Magazine*, August 1830)

WHAT a difference between this subject and my last—a “ Free Admission ! ” Yet from the crowded theatre to the sick chamber, from the noise, the glare, the keen delight, to the loneliness, the darkness, the dulness, and the pain, there is but one step. A breath of air, an overhanging cloud, effects it ; and though the transition is made in an

instant, it seems as if it would last for ever. A sudden illness not only puts a stop to the career of our triumphs and agreeable sensations, but blots out all recollection of and desire for them. We lose the relish of enjoyment; we are effectually cured of our romance. Our bodies are confined to our beds: nor can our thoughts wantonly detach themselves and take the road to pleasure, but turn back with doubt and loathing at the faint evanescent phantom which has usurped its place. If the folding-doors of the imagination were thrown open or left ajar, so that from the disordered couch where we lay, we could still hail the vista of the past or future, and see the gay and gorgeous visions floating at a distance, however denied to our embrace, the contrast, though mortifying, might have something soothing in it, the mock-splendour might be the greater for the actual gloom, but the misery is that we cannot conceive anything beyond or better than the present evil: we are shut up and spell-bound in that, the curtains of the mind are drawn close, we cannot escape from "the body of this death," our souls are conquered, dismayed, "cooped and cabined in," and thrown with the lumber of our corporeal frames in one corner of a neglected and solitary room. We hate ourselves and everything else: nor does one ray of comfort "peep through the blanket of the dark" to give us hope. How should we entertain the image of grace and beauty when our bodies writhe with pain? To what purpose invoke the echo of some rich strain of music, when we ourselves can scarcely breathe? The very attempt is an im-

possibility. We give up the vain task of linking delight to agony, or urging torpor into ecstasy, which makes the very heart sick. We feel the present pain, and an impatient longing to get rid of it. This were indeed "a consummation devoutly to be wished:" on this we are intent, in earnest, inexorable, all else is impertinence and folly; and could we but obtain Ease (that Goddess of the infirm and suffering) at any price, we think we could forswear all other joy and all other sorrow. *Hoc erat in votis*. All other things but our disorder and its cure seem less than nothing and vanity. It assumes a palpable form; it becomes a demon, a spectre, an incubus hovering over and oppressing us; we grapple with it; it strikes its fangs into us, spreads its arms round us, infects us with its breath, glares upon us with its hideous aspect; we feel it take possession of every fibre and of every faculty; and we are at length so absorbed and fascinated by it, that we cannot divert our reflections from it for an instant, for all other things but pain (and that which we suffer most acutely) appear to have lost their pith and power to interest. They are turned to dust and stubble. This is the reason of the fine resolutions we sometimes form in such cases, and of the vast superiority of the sick-bed to the pomps and thrones of the world. We easily renounce wine when we have nothing but the taste of physic in our mouths; the rich banquet tempts us not, when "our very gorge rises" within us. Love and Beauty fly from a bed twisted into a thousand folds by restless lassitude and tormenting cares,

the nerve of pleasure is killed by the pains that shoot through the head or rack the limbs : and indigestion seizes you with its leaden grasp and giant force (down Ambition !)—you shiver and tremble like a leaf in a fit of the ague. (Avarice, let go your palsied hold !) We then are in mood, without ghostly advice, to betake ourselves to the life of the "hermit poor

In pensive place obscure"—

and should be glad to prevent the return of a fever raging in the blood by feeding on pulse, and slaking our thirst at the limpid brook. The sudden resolutions, however, or "vows made in pain as violent and void," are generally of short duration : the excess and the sorrow for it are alike selfish ; and those repentances which are the most loud and passionate are the surest to end speedily in a relapse ; for both originate in the same cause, the being engrossed by the prevailing feeling (whatever it may be), and an utter incapacity to look beyond it.

"The Devil was sick, the Devil a monk would be :
The Devil grew well, the Devil a monk was he !"

It is amazing how little effect physical suffering or local circumstances have upon the mind, except while we are subject to their immediate influence. While the impression lasts they are everything ; when it is gone they are nothing. We toss and tumble about in a sick-bed ; we lie on our right side, we then change to the left ; we stretch ourselves on our backs, we turn on our faces ; we wrap ourselves under the clothes to exclude the cold, we throw

them off to escape the heat and suffocation ; we grasp the pillow in agony, we fling ourselves out of bed, we walk up and down the room with hasty or feeble steps ; we return to bed ; we are worn out with fatigue and pain, yet can get no repose for the one, nor intermission for the other ; we summon all our patience, or give vent to passion and petty rage ; nothing avails ; we seem wedded to our disease, " like life and death in disproportion met ; " we make new efforts, try new expedients, but nothing appears to shake it off, or promise relief from our grim foe : it infixes its sharp sting into us, or overpowers us by its sickly and stunning weight ; every moment is as much as we can bear, and yet there seems no end of our lengthening tortures : we are ready to faint with exhaustion or work ourselves up to a frenzy : we " trouble deaf Heaven with our bootless prayers ; " we think our last hour has come, or peevishly wish it were, to put an end to the scene ; we ask questions as to the origin of evil, and the necessity of pain ; we " moralise our complaints into a thousand similes ; " we deny the use of medicine *in toto*, we have a full persuasion that all doctors are mad or knaves, that our object is to gain relief, and theirs (out of the perversity of human nature, or to seem wiser than we) to prevent it ; we catechise the apothecary, rail at the nurse, and cannot so much as conceive the possibility that this state of things should not last for ever ; we are even angry at those who would give us encouragement as if they would make dupes or children of us ; we might seek a release by poison, a halter, or the sword, but

we have not strength of mind enough—our nerves are too shaken to attempt even this poor revenge—when lo ! a change comes, the spell falls off, and the next moment we forget all that has happened to us. No sooner does our disorder turn its back upon us than we laugh at it. The state we have been in sounds like a dream—a fable ; health is the order of the day, strength is ours *de jure* and *de facto* ; and we discard all uncalled-for evidence to the contrary with a smile of contemptuous incredulity, just as we throw our physic-bottles out of the window ! I see (as I awake from a short uneasy dose) a golden light shine through the white window-curtains on the opposite wall ;—is it the dawn of a new day, or the departing light of evening ? I do not well know, for the opium “ they have drugged my posset with ” has made strong havoc with my brain, and I am uncertain whether time has stood still, or advanced, or gone backward. By “ puzzling o’er the doubt,” my attention is drawn a little out of myself to external objects ; and I consider whether it would not administer some relief to my monotonous languor if I call up a vivid picture of an evening sky I witnessed a short time before—the white, fleecy clouds, the azure vault, the verdant fields, and balmy air ! In vain ! The wings of fancy refuse to mount from my bedside. The air without has nothing in common with the closeness within ; the clouds disappear, the sky is instantly overcast and black. I walk out in this scene soon after I recover ; and with those favourite and well-known objects interposed, can no longer recall the tumbled pillow, the juleps, or

the labels, or the wholesome 'dungeon in which I was before immured: What is contrary to our present sensations or settled habits amalgamates indifferently with our belief; the imagination rules over imaginary themes; the senses and customs have a narrower sway, and admit but one guest at a time. It is hardly to be wondered at that we dread physical calamities so little before-hand; we think no more of them after they have happened. Out of sight out of mind. This will perhaps explain why all actual punishment has so little effect; it is a state contrary to nature, alien to the will. If it does not touch honour and conscience (and where these are not how can it touch them?) it goes for nothing; and where these are, it rather sears and hardens them. The gyves, the cell, the meagre fare, the hard labour, are abhorrent to the mind of the culprit on whom they are imposed, who carries the love of liberty or indulgence to licentiousness; and who throws the thought of them behind him (the moment he can evade the penalty) with scorn and laughter,

“Like Samson his green wythes”

So, in travelling, we often meet with great fatigue and inconvenience from heat or cold, or other accident, and resolve never to go a journey again; but we are ready to set off on a new excursion to-morrow. We remember the landscape, the change of scene, the romantic expectation, and think no more of the heat, the noise, and the dust. The body forgets its grievances till they recur; but imagination, passion, pride, have a longer memory and quicker

apprehensions. To the first, the pleasure or pain is nothing when once over; to the last, it is only then that they begin to exist. The line in *Metastasio*,

"The worst of every evil is the fear,"

is true only when applied to this latter sort. It is curious that, on coming out of a sick-room, where one has been pent up some time, and grown weak and nervous, and looking at nature for the first time, the objects that present themselves have a very questionable and spectral appearance; the people in the street resemble flies crawling about, and seem scarce half alive. It is we who are just risen from a torpid and unwholesome state, and who impart our imperfect feelings of existence, health, and motion to others. Or it may be that the violence and exertion of the pain we have gone through make common everyday objects seem unreal and unsubstantial. It is not till we have established ourselves in form in the sitting-room, wheeled round the arm-chair to the fire (for this makes part of our re-introduction to the ordinary modes of being in all seasons), felt our appetite return, and taken up a book, that we can be considered as at all returned to ourselves. And even then our sensations are rather empirical than positive, as after sleep we stretch out our hands to know whether we are awake. This is the time for reading. Books are then indeed "a world both pure and good," into which we enter with all our hearts, after our revival from illness and respite from the tomb, as with the freshness and novelty of youth. They are not merely accept-

able as without too much exertion they pass the time and relieve *ennui*; but from a certain suspension and deadening of the passions, and abstraction of worldly pursuits, they may be said to bring back and be friendly to the guileless and enthusiastic tone of feeling with which we formerly read them. Sickness has weaned us *pro tempore* from contest and cabal; and we are fain to be docile and children again. All strong changes in our present pursuits throw us back upon the past. This is the shortest and most complete emancipation from our late discomfiture. We wonder that anyone who has read the *History of a Foundling* should labour under an indigestion, nor do we comprehend how a perusal of the *Fairy Queen* should not ensure the true believer an uninterrupted succession of halcyon days. Present objects bear a retrospective meaning, and point to "a foregone conclusion." Returning back to life with half-strung nerves and shattered strength, we seem as when we first entered it with uncertain purposes and faltering aims. The machine has received a shock, and it moves on more tremulously than before, and not all at once in the beaten track. Startled at the approach of death, we are willing to get as far from it as we can by making a proxy of our former selves; and finding the precarious tenure by which we hold existence, and its last sands running out, we gather up and make the most of the fragments that memory has stored up for us. Everything is seen through a medium of reflection and contrast. We hear the sound of merry voices in the street, and this carries us back to

the recollections of some country town or village group—

“We see the children sporting on the shore,
And hear the mighty waters roaring evermore.”

A cricket chirps on the hearth, and we are reminded of Christmas gambols long ago. The very cries in the street seem to be of a former date; and the dry toast eats very much as it did—twenty years ago. A rose smells doubly sweet after being stifled with tinctures and essences; and we enjoy the idea of a journey and an inn the more for having been bed-ridden. But a book is the secret and sure charm to bring all these implied associations to a focus. I should prefer an old one, Mr. Lamb's favourite, the *Journey to Lisbon*, or the *Decameron*, if I could get it; but, if a new one, let it be *Paul Clifford*. That book has the singular advantage of being written by a gentleman, and not about his own class. The characters he commemorates are every moment at fault between life and death, hunger and forced loan on the public; and therefore the interest they take in themselves, and which we take in them, has no cant or affectation in it, but is “lively, audible, and full of vent.” A set of well-dressed gentlemen, picking their teeth with a graceful air after dinner, and endeavouring to keep their cravats from the slightest discomposure, and saying the most insipid things in the most insipid manner, do not make a scene. Well; then, I have got the new paraphrase on the *Beggars' Opera*, am fairly embarked in it; and at the end of the first volume, where I am galloping

across the heath with the three highwaymen, while the moon is shining full upon them, feel my nerves so braced, and my spirits so exhilarated, that, to say truth, I am scarce sorry for the occasion that has thrown me upon the work and the author—have quite forgot my SICK ROOM, and am more than ready to recant the doctrine that *Free-Admission* to the theatre is

“The true pathos, and sublime
Of human life,”

for I feel as I read that if the stage shows us the masks of men and the pageant of the world, books let us into their souls and lay open to us the secrets of our own. They are the first and last, the most home-felt, the most heart-felt of all our enjoyments!

CHARLES LAMB

XXII. POPULAR FALLACIES

NO. 14. THAT WE SHOULD RISE WITH THE LARK

At what precise minute that little airy musician doffs his nightgear, and prepares to tune up his unseasonable matins, we are not naturalist enough to determine. But for a mere human gentleman—that has no orchestra business to call him from his warm bed to such preposterous exercises—we take ten, or half after ten (eleven, of course, during this Christmas solstice), to be the very earliest hour at which he can begin to think of abandoning his pillow. To think of it, we say; for to do it in earnest, requires another half-hour's good consideration. Not but there are pretty sun-risings, as we are told, and such-like gawds, abroad in the world, in summer-time especially, some hours before what we have assigned; which a gentleman may see, as they say, only for getting up. But having been tempted once or twice, in earlier life, to assist at those ceremonies, we confess our curiosity abated. We are no longer ambitious of being the sun's courtiers, to attend at his morning levees. We hold the good hours of the dawn too sacred to waste them upon such observances;

which have in them, besides, something Pagan and Persic. To say truth, we never anticipated our usual hour, or got up with the sun (as 'tis called), to go a journey, or upon a foolish whole day's pleasuring, but we suffered for it all the long hours after in listlessness and headaches; Nature herself sufficiently declaring her sense of our presumption in aspiring to regulate our frail waking courses by the measures of that celestial and sleepless traveller. We deny not that there is something sprightly and vigorous, at the outset especially, in these break-of-day excursions. It is flattering to get the start of a lazy world; to conquer Death by proxy in his image. But the seeds of sleep and mortality are in us; and we pay usually in strange qualms, before night falls, the penalty of the unnatural inversion. Therefore, while the busy part of mankind are fast huddling on their clothes, are already up and about their occupations, content to have swallowed their sleep by wholesale; we choose to linger a-bed and digest our dreams. It is the very time to recombine the wandering images, which night in a confused mass presented; to snatch them from forgetfulness; to shape, and mould them. Some people have no good of their dreams. Like fast feeders they gulp them too grossly, to taste them curiously. We love to chew the cud of a foregone vision; to collect the scattered rays of a brighter phantasm, or act over again, with firmer nerves, the sadder nocturnal tragedies; to drag into daylight a struggling and half-vanishing nightmare; to handle and examine the terrors, or the airy solaces. We have too much

respect for these spiritual communications, to let them go so lightly. We are not so stupid, or so careless as that Imperial forgetter of his dreams, that we should need a seer to remind us of the form of them. They seem to us to have as much significance as our waking concerns; or rather to import us more nearly, as more nearly we approach by years to the shadowy world, whither we are hastening. We have shaken hands with the world's business; we have done with it; we have discharged ourself of it. Why should we get up? we have neither suit to solicit, nor affairs to manage. The drama has shut in upon us at the fourth act. We have nothing here to expect, but in a short time a sick-bed, and a dismissal. We delight to anticipate death by such shadows as night affords. We are already half acquainted with ghosts. We were never much in the world. Disappointment early struck a dark veil between us and its dazzling illusions. Our spirits showed grey before our hairs. The mighty changes of the world already appear as but the vain stuff out of which dramas are composed. We have asked no more of life than what the mimic images in playhouses present us with. Even those types have waxed fainter. Our clock appears to have struck. We are SUPERANNUATED. In this dearth of mundane satisfaction, we contract politic alliances with shadows. It is good to have friends at court. The abstracted media of dreams seem no ill introduction to that spiritual presence, upon which, in no long time, we expect to be thrown. We are trying to know a little of the usages of that colony; to learn the language, and the faces we-

shall meet with there, that we may be the less awkward at our first coming among them. We willingly call a phantom our fellow, as knowing we shall soon be of their dark companionship. Therefore, we cherish dreams. We try to spell in them the alphabet of the invisible world; and think we know already, how it shall be with us. Those uncouth shapes which, while we clung to flesh and blood, affrighted us, have become familiar. We feel attenuated into their meagre essences, and have given the hand of half-way approach to incorporeal being. We once thought life to be something; but it has unaccountably fallen from us before its time. Therefore we choose to dally with visions. The sun has no purposes of ours to light us to. Why should we get up?

NO. 16. THAT A SULKY TEMPER IS A MISFORTUNE

We grant that it is, and a very serious one—to a man's friends; and to all that have to do with him; but whether the condition of the man himself is so much to be deplored, may admit of a question. We can speak a little to it, being ourself but lately recovered—we whisper it in confidence, Reader—out of a long and desperate fit of the sullen. Was the cure a blessing? The conviction which wrought it, came too clearly to leave a scruple of the fanciful injuries—for they were mere fancies—which had provoked the humour. But the humour itself was too self-pleasing while it lasted—we know how bare we lay ourself in the confession—to be abandoned all at once with the grounds of it. We still brood

over wrongs which we know to have been imaginary ; and for our old acquaintance N——, whom we find to have been a truer friend than we took him for, we substitute some phantom—a Caius or a Titius—as like him as we dare to form it, to wreak our yet unsatisfied resentments on. It is mortifying to fall at once from the pinnacle of neglect ; to forego the idea of having been ill-used and contumaciously treated by an old friend. The first thing to aggrandize a man in his own conceit, is to conceive of himself as neglected. There let him fix if he can. To undeceive him is to deprive him of the most tickling morsel within the range of self-complacency. No flattery can come near it. Happy is he who suspects his friend of an injustice ; but supremely blest, who thinks all his friends in a conspiracy to depress and undervalue him. There is a pleasure (we sing not to the profane) far beyond the reach of all that the world counts joy—a deep, enduring satisfaction in the depths, where the superficial seek it not, of discontent. Were we to recite one half of this mystery—which we were let into by our late dissatisfaction, all the world would be in love with disrespect ; we should wear a slight for a bracelet, and neglects and contumacies would be the only matter for courtship. Unlike to that mysterious book in the Apocalypse, the study of this mystery is unpalatable only in the commencement. The first sting of a suspicion is grievous ; but wait—out of that wound, which to flesh and blood seemed so difficult, there is balm and honey to be extracted. Your friend passed you on such and such a day—having

in his company one that you conceived worse than ambiguously disposed towards you—passed you in the street without notice. To be sure, he is something short-sighted; and it was in your power to have accosted *him*. But the facts and sane inferences are trifles to a true adept in the science of dissatisfaction. He must have seen you; and S——, who was with him, must have been the cause of the contempt. It galls you, and well it may. But have patience. Go home, and make the worst of it, and you are a made man from this time. Shut yourself up, and—rejecting, as an enemy to your peace, every whispering suggestion that but insinuates there may be a mistake—reflect seriously upon the many lesser instances which you had begun to perceive, in proof of your friend's disaffection towards you. None of them singly was much to the purpose, but the aggregate weight is positive; and you have this last affront to clench them. Thus far the process is anything but agreeable. But now to your relief comes in the comparative faculty. You conjure up all the kind feelings you have had for your friend; what you have been to him, and what you would have been to him, if he would have suffered you; how you defended him in this or that place; and his good name—his literary reputation, and so forth, was always dearer to you than your own! Your heart, spite of itself, yearns towards him. You could weep tears of blood but for a restraining pride. How say you? do you not yet begin to apprehend a comfort? some allay of sweetness in the bitter waters? Stop not here, nor penuriously cheat yourself of your

reversions. You are on vantage ground. Enlarge your speculations, and take in the rest of your friends, as a spark kindles more sparks. Was there one among them who has not to you proved hollow, false, slippery as water? Begin to think that the relation itself is inconsistent with mortality. That the very idea of friendship, with its component parts, as honour, fidelity, steadiness, exists but in your single bosom. Image yourself to yourself, as the only possible friend in a world incapable of that communion. Now the gloom thickens. The little star of self-love twinkles, that is to encourage you through deeper glooms than this. You are not yet at the half-point of your elevation. You are not yet, believe me, half sulky enough. Adverting to the world in general (as these circles in the mind will spread to infinity), reflect with what strange injustice you have been treated in quarters where (setting gratitude and the expectation of friendly returns aside as chimæras) you pretended no claim beyond justice, the naked due of all men. Think the very idea of right and fit fled from the earth, or your breast the solitary receptacle of it, till you have swelled yourself into at least one hemisphere; the other being the vast Arabian Stony of your friends and the world aforesaid. To grow bigger every moment in your own conceit, and the world to lessen; to deify yourself at the expense of your species; to judge the world—this is the acme and supreme point of your mystery—these the true PLEASURES OF SULKINESS. We profess no more of this grand secret than what once if experimented on one rainy afternoon in the

I shall no longer see a woman standing up in the pit of a London theatre, till she is sick and faint with the exertion, with men about her, seated at their ease, and jeering at her distress : till one, that seems to have more manners or conscience than the rest, significantly declares " she should be welcome to his seat, if she were a little younger and handsomer." Place this dapper warehouseman, or that rider, in a circle of their own female acquaintance, and you shall confess you have not seen a politer-bred man in Lothbury.

Lastly I shall begin to believe that there is some such principle influencing our conduct, when more than one-half of the drudgery and coarse servitude of the world shall cease to be performed by women.

Until that day comes, I shall never believe this boasted point to be anything more than a conventional fiction ; a pageant got up between the sexes, in a certain rank, and at a certain time of life, in which both find their account equally.

I shall be even disposed to rank it among the salutary fictions of life, when in polite circles I shall see the same attentions paid to age as to youth, to homely features, as to handsome, to coarse complexions as to clear—to the woman, as she is a woman, not as she is a beauty, a fortune, or a title.

I shall believe it to be something more than a name, when a well-dressed gentleman in a well-dressed company can advert to the topic of *female old age* without exciting, and intending to excite, a sneer :—when the phrases " antiquated virginity," and such a one as " overstood her market," pronounced in good

XXIII. MODERN GALLANTRY

(From The Essays of Elia)

IN comparing modern with ancient manners, we are pleased to compliment ourselves upon the point of gallantry; a certain obsequiousness, or deferential respect, which we are supposed to pay to females, as females.

I shall believe that this principle actuates our conduct, when I can forget, that in the nineteenth century of the era from which we date our civility; we are but just beginning to leave off the very frequent practice of whipping females in public, in common with the coarsest male offenders.

I shall believe it to be influential, when I can shut my eyes to the fact that in England women are still occasionally—hanged.

I shall believe in it, when actresses are no longer subject to be hissed off the stage by gentlemen.

I shall believe in it, when Dorimant hands a fish-wife across the kennel; or assists the apple-woman to pick up her wandering fruit, which some unlucky dray has just dissipated.

I shall believe in it when the Dorimants in humbler life, who would be thought in their way notable adepts in this refinement, shall act upon it in places where they are not known, or think themselves not observed—when I shall see the traveller for some rich tradesman part with his admired box-coat, to spread it over the defenceless shoulders of the poor woman, who is passing to her parish on the roof of the same stage-coach with him, drenched in the rain—when

I shall no longer see a woman standing up in the pit of a London theatre, till she is sick and faint with the exertion, with men about her, seated at their ease, and jeering at her distress; till one, that seems to have more manners or conscience than the rest, significantly declares "she should be welcome to his seat, if she were a little younger and handsomer." Place this dapper warehouseman, or that rider, in a circle of their own female acquaintance, and you shall confess you have not seen a politer-bred man in Lothbury.

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I shall believe it to be something more than a name, when a well-dressed gentleman in a well-dressed company can advert to the topic of *female old age* without exciting, and intending to excite, a sneer:—when the phrases "antiquated virginity," and such a one as "overstood her market," pronounced in good

company, shall raise immediate offence in man, or woman, that shall hear them spoken.

Joseph Paice, of Bread-street-hill, merchant, and one of the Directors of the South-Sea Company—the same to whom Edwards, the Shakespeare commentator, has addressed a fine sonnet—was the only pattern of consistent gallantry I have met with. He took me under his shelter at an early age, and bestowed some pains upon me. I owe to his precepts and example whatever there is of the man of business (and that is not much) in my composition. It was not his fault that I did not profit more. Though bred a Presbyterian, and brought up a merchant, he was the finest gentleman of his time. He had not *one* system of attention to females in the drawing-room, and *another* in the shop, or at the stall. I do not mean that he made no distinction. But he never lost sight of sex, or overlooked it in the casualties of a disadvantageous situation. I have seen him stand bareheaded—smile if you please—to a poor servant girl, while she has been enquiring of him the way to some street—in such a posture of unforced civility, as neither to embarrass her in the acceptance, nor himself in the offer, of it. He was no dangler, in the common acceptation of the word, after women: but he revered and upheld, in every form in which it came before him, *womanhood*. I have seen him—nay, smile not—tenderly escorting a market-woman, whom he had encountered in a shower, exalting his umbrella over her poor basket of fruit, that it might receive no damage, with as much carefulness as if she had been a countess. To the reverend form of

Female Eld he would yield the wall (though it were to an ancient beggar-woman) with more ceremony than we can afford to show our grandams. He was the Preux Chevalier of Age; the Sir Calidore, or Sir Tristan; to those who have no Calidores or Tristans to defend them. The roses, that had long faded thence, still bloomed for him in those withered and yellow cheeks.

He was never married, but in his youth he paid his addresses to the beautiful Susan Winstanley—old Winstanley's daughter of Clapton—who, dying in the early days of their courtship, confirmed in him the resolution of perpetual bachelorship. It was during their short courtship, he told me, that he had been one day treating his mistress with a profusion of civil speeches—the common gallantries—to which kind of thing she had hitherto manifested no repugnance—but in this instance with no effect. He could not obtain from her a decent acknowledgment in return. She rather seemed to resent his compliments. He could not set it down to caprice, for the lady had always shown herself above that littleness. When he ventured on the following day, finding her a little better humoured, to expostulate with her on her coldness of yesterday, she confessed, with her usual frankness, that she had no sort of dislike to his attentions; that she could even endure some high-flown compliments; that a young woman placed in her situation had a right to expect all sorts of civil things said to her; that she hoped she could digest a dose of adulation, short of insincerity, with as little injury to her humility as most young women;

but that—a little before he had commenced his compliments—she had overheard him by accident, in rather rough language, rating a young woman, who had not brought home his cravats quite to the appointed time, and she thought to herself, “As I am Miss Susan Winstanley, and a young lady—a reputed beauty, and known to be a fortune—I can have my choice of the finest speeches from the mouth of this very fine gentleman who is courting me—but if I had been poor Mary Such-a-one (*naming the milliner*), and had failed of bringing home the cravats to the appointed hour—though perhaps I had sat up half the night to forward them—what sort of compliments should I have received then?—And my woman’s pride came to my assistance; and I thought, that if it were only to do *me* honour, a female, like myself, might have received handsomer usage; and I was determined not to accept any fine speeches to the compromise of that sex, the belonging to which was after all my strongest claim and title to them.”

I think the lady discovered both generosity and a just way of thinking, in this rebuke which she gave her lover; and I have sometimes imagined, that the uncommon strain of courtesy, which through life regulated the actions and behaviour of my friend towards all of womankind indiscriminately, owed its happy origin to this seasonable lesson from the lips of his lamented mistress.

I wish the whole female world would entertain the same notion of these things that Miss Winstanley showed. Then we should see something of the spirit of consistent gallantry; and no longer witness the

anomaly of the same man—a pattern of true politeness to a wife—of cold contempt, or rudeness, to a sister—the idolater of his female mistress—the disparager and despiser of his no less female aunt, or unfortunate—still female—maiden cousin. Just so much respect as a woman derogates from her own sex, in whatever condition placed—her handmaid, or dependent—she deserves to have diminished from herself on that score; and probably will feel the diminution, when youth, and beauty, and advantages, not inseparable from sex, shall lose of their attraction. What a woman should demand of a man in courtship, or after it, is first—respect for her as she is a woman;—and next to that—to be respected by him above all other women. But let her stand upon her female character as upon a foundation; and let the attentions, incident to individual preference, be so many pretty additaments and ornaments—as many, and as fanciful, as you please—to that main structure. Let her first lesson be — with sweet Susan Winstanley — to *reverence her sex*.

XXIV. THE CONVALESCENT

(From *The Essays of Elia*)

A PRETTY severe fit of indisposition which, under the name of a nervous fever, has made a prisoner of me for some weeks past, and is but slowly leaving me, has reduced me to an incapacity of reflecting upon any topic foreign to itself. Expect no healthy conclusions from me this month, Reader; I can offer you only sick men's dreams.

And truly the whole state of sickness is such ; for what else is it but a magnificent dream for a man to lie a-bed, and draw daylight curtains about him ; and, shutting out the sun, to induce a total oblivion of all the works which are going on under it ? To become insensible to all the operations of life, except the beatings of one feeble pulse ?

If there be a regal solitude, it is a sick-bed. How the patient lords it there ; what caprices he acts without control ! how king-like he sways his pillow—tumbling, and tossing, and shifting and lowering, and thumping, and flatting, and moulding it, to the ever-varying requisitions of his throbbing temples.

He changes *sides* oftener than a politician. Now he lies full length, then half-length, obliquely, transversely, head and feet quite across the bed ; and none accuses him of tergiversation. Within the four curtains he is absolute. They are his *Mare Clausum*.

How sickness enlarges the dimensions of a man's self to himself ! he is his own exclusive object. Supreme selfishness is inculcated upon him as his only duty. 'Tis the Two Tables of the Law to him. He has nothing to think of but how to get well. What passes out of doors, or within them, so he hear not the jarring of them, affects him not.

A little while ago he was greatly concerned in the event of a lawsuit, which was to be the making or the marring of his dearest friend. He was to be seen trudging about upon this man's errand to fifty quarters of the town at once, jogging this witness, refreshing that solicitor. The cause was to come on yesterday. He is absolutely as indifferent

to the decision as if it were a question to be tried at Pekin. Peradventure from some whispering, going on about the house, not intended for his hearing, he picks up enough to make him understand that things went cross-grained in the Court yesterday, and his friend is ruined. But the word "friend," and the word "ruin," disturb him no more than so much jargon. He is not to think of anything but how to get better.

What a world of foreign cares are merged in that absorbing consideration !

He has put on the strong armour of sickness, he is wrapped in the callous hide of suffering ; he keeps his sympathy, like some curious vintage, under trusty lock and key, for his own use only.

He lies pitying himself, honing and moaning to himself ; he yearneth over himself ; his bowels are even melted within him, to think what he suffers ; he is not ashamed to weep over himself.

He is for ever plotting how to do some good to himself ; studying little stratagems and artificial alleviations.

He makes the most of himself ; dividing himself, by an allowable fiction, into as many distinct individuals as he hath sore and sorrowing members. Sometimes he meditates—as of a thing apart from him—upon his poor aching head, and that dull pain which, dozing or waking, lay in it all the past night like a log, or palpable substance of pain, not to be removed without opening the very skull, as it seemed, to take it thence. Or he pities his long, clammy, attenuated fingers. He compassionates him-

self all over; and his bed is a very discipline of humanity and tender heart.

He is his own sympathizer; and instinctively feels that none can so well perform that office for him. He cares for few spectators to his tragedy. Only that punctual face of the old nurse pleases him, that announces his broths and his cordials. He likes it because it is so unmoved, and because he can pour forth his feverish ejaculations before it as unreservedly as to his bed-post.

To the world's business he is dead. He understands not what the callings and occupations of mortals are; only he has a glimmering conceit of some such thing, when the doctor makes his daily call: and even in the lines of that busy face he reads no multiplicity of patients, but solely conceives of himself as *the sick man*. To what other uneasy couch the good man is hastening, when he slips out of his chamber, folding up his thin *douceur* so carefully for fear of rustling—is no speculation which he can at present entertain. He thinks only of the regular return of the same phenomenon at the same hour to-morrow.

Household rumours touch him not. Some faint murmur, indicative of life going on within the house, soothes him, while he knows not distinctly what it is. He is not to know anything, not to think of anything. Servants gliding up and down the distant staircase, treading as upon velvet, gently keep his ear awake, so long as he troubles not himself further than with some feeble guess at their errands. Exacter knowledge would be a burthen to him: he can just

endure the pressure of conjecture. He opens his eye faintly at the dull stroke of the muffled knocker, and closes it again without asking "Who was it?" He is flattered by a general notion that inquiries are making after him, but he cares not to know the name of the inquirer. In the general stillness, and awful hush of the house, he lies in state and feels his sovereignty.

To be sick is to enjoy monarchical prerogatives. Compare the silent tread and quiet ministry, almost by the eye only, with which he is served—with the careless demeanour, the unceremonious goings in and out (slapping of doors, or leaving them open) of the very same attendants, when he is getting a little better—and you will confess, that from the bed of sickness (throne let me rather call it) to the elbow-chair of convalescence, is a fall from dignity, amounting to a deposition.

How convalescence shrinks a man back to his pristine stature! Where is now the space, which he occupied so lately, in his own, in the family's eye? The scene of his regalities, his sick room, which was his presence-chamber; where he lay and acted his despotic fancies—how is it reduced to a common bedroom! The trimness of the very bed has something petty and unmeaning about it. It is *made* every day. How unlike to that wavy, many-furrowed oceanic surface, which it presented so short a time since, when to *make* it was a service not to be thought of at oftener than three or four day revolutions, when the patient was with pain and grief to be lifted for a little while out of it, to submit to the encroachments

of unwelcome neatness, and decencies which his shaken frame deprecated; then to be lifted into it again, for another three or four days' respite, to flounder it out of shape again, while every fresh furrow was an historical record of some shifting posture, some uneasy turning, some seeking for a little ease; and the shrunken skin scarce told a truer story than the crumpled coverlid.

Hushed are those mysterious sighs—those groans—so much more awful, while we knew not from what caverns of vast hidden suffering they proceeded. The Lernean pangs are quenched. The riddle of sickness is solved; and Philoctetes is become an ordinary personage.

Perhaps some relic of the sick man's dream of greatness survives in the still lingering visitations of the medical attendant. But how is he, too, changed with everything else! Can this be he—this man of news—of chat—of anecdote—of everything but physic—can this be he, who so lately came between the patient and his cruel enemy, as on some solemn embassy from Nature, erecting herself into a high mediating party?—Pshaw! 'tis some old woman.

Farewell with him all that made sickness pompous—the spell that hushed the household—the desert-like stillness, felt throughout its inmost chambers—the mute attendance—the inquiry by looks—the still softer delicacies of self-attention—the sole and single eye of distemper alone fixed upon itself—world-thoughts excluded—the man a world unto himself—his own theatre—

What a speck is he dwindled into!

In this flat swamp of convalescence, left by the ebb of sickness, yet far enough from the terra-firma of established health, your note, dear Editor, reached me, requesting—an article. In *Articulo Mortis*, thought I; but it is something hard—and the quibble, wretched as it was, relieved me. The summons, unseasonable as it appeared, seemed to link me on again to the petty businesses of life, which I had lost sight of; a gentle call to activity, however trivial; a wholesome weaning from that preposterous dream of self-absorption—the puffy state of sickness—in which I confess to have lain so long, insensible to the magazines and monarchies of the world alike; to its laws, and to its literature. The hypochondriac flatus is subsiding, the acres, which in imagination I had spread over—for the sick man swells in the sole contemplation of his single sufferings, till he becomes a Tityus to himself—are wasting to a span; and for the giant of self-importance, which I was so lately, you have me 'once again in my natural pretensions—the lean and meagre figure of your insignificant Essayist.

XXV. THE CHARACTER OF ELIA

(From *The Essays of Elia*)

THIS poor gentleman, who for some months past had been in a declining way, hath at length paid his final tribute to nature.

To say truth, it is time he were gone. The humour of the thing, if there was ever much in it, was pretty

well exhausted ; and a two years and a half existence has been a tolerable duration for a phantom.

I am now at liberty to confess, that much which, I have heard objected to my late friend's writings, was well-founded. Crude they are, I grant you—a sort of unlicked, incondite things—villanously pranked in an affected array of antique modes and phrases. They had not been *his*, if they had been; other than such ; and better it is, that a writer should be natural in a self-pleasing quaintness, than to affect a naturalness (so called) that should be strange to him. Egotistical they have been pronounced by some who did not know, that what he tells us, as of himself, was often true only (historically) of another; as in a former Essay (to save many instances)—where under the *first person* (his favourite figure) he shadows forth the forlorn estate of a country-boy placed at a London school, far from his friends and connections;—in direct opposition to his own early history. If it be egotism to imply and twine with his own identity, the griefs and affections of another—making himself many, or reducing many unto himself—then is the skilful novelist, who all along brings in his hero, or heroine, speaking of themselves, the greatest egotist of all ; who yet has never, therefore, been accused of that narrowness. And how shall the intenser dramatist escape being faulty, who doubtless, under cover of passion uttered by another, oftentimes gives blameless vent to his most inward feelings, and expresses his own story modestly ?

My late friend was in many respects a singular character. Those who did not like him, hated him ;

and some, who once liked him, afterwards became his bitterest haters. The truth is, he gave himself too little concern what he uttered, and in whose presence. He observed neither time nor place, and would e'en out with what came uppermost. With the severe religionist he would pass for a free-thinker; while the other faction set him down for a bigot, or persuaded themselves that he belied his sentiments. Few understood him; and I am not certain that at all times he quite understood himself. He too much affected that dangerous figure—irony. He sowed doubtful speeches, and reaped plain, unequivocal hatred. He would interrupt the gravest discussion with some light jest; and yet, perhaps, not quite irrelevant in ears that could understand it. Your long and much talkers hated him. The informal habit of his mind, joined to an inveterate impediment of speech, forbade him to be an orator; and he seemed determined that no one else should play that part when he was present. He was *petit* and ordinary in his person and appearance. I have seen him sometimes in what is called good company, but where he has been a stranger, sit silent, and be suspected for an odd fellow; till some unlucky occasion provoking it, he would stutter out some senseless pun (not altogether senseless perhaps, if rightly taken), which has stamped his character for the evening. It was hit or miss with him; but nine times out of ten he contrived by this device to send away a whole company his enemies. His conceptions rose kindlier than his utterance, and his happiest *impromptus* had the appearance of effort. He has been accused

of trying to be witty, when in truth he was but struggling to give his poor thoughts articulation. He chose his companions for some individuality of character which they manifested.—Hence, not many persons of science, and few professed *literati*, were of his councils. They were, for the most part, persons of an uncertain fortune; and, as to such people commonly nothing is more obnoxious than a gentleman of settled (though moderate) income, he passed with most of them for a great miser. To my knowledge this was a mistake. His *intimados*, to confess a truth, were in the world's eye a ragged regiment. He found them floating on the surface of society; and the colour, or something else, in the weed pleased him. The burrs stuck to him—but they were good and loving burrs for all that. He never greatly cared for the society of what are called good people. If any of these were scandalised (and offences were sure to arise), he could not help it. When he has been remonstrated with for not making more concessions to the feelings of good people, he would retort by asking, what one point did these good people ever concede to him? He was temperate in his meals and diversions, but always kept a little on this side of abstemiousness. Only in the use of the Indian weed he might be thought a little excessive. He took it, he would say, as a solvent of speech. Marry—as the friendly vapour ascended, how his prattle would curl up sometimes with it! the ligaments which tongue-tied him were loosened, and the stammerer proceeded a statish.

I do not know whether I ought to bemoan or rejoice

that my old friend is departed. His jests were beginning to grow obsolete, and his stories to be found out. He felt the approaches of age ; and while he pretended to cling to life, you saw how slender were the ties left to bind him. Discoursing with him flatteringly on this subject, he expressed himself with a pettishness, which I thought unworthy of him. In our walks about his suburban retreat (as he called it) at Shacklewell, some children belonging to a school of industry had met us, and bowed and curtsayed, as he thought, in an especial manner to him. " They take me for a visiting governor," he muttered earnestly. He had a horror, which he carried to a foible, of looking like anything important and parochial. He thought that he approached nearer to that stamp daily. He had a general aversion from being treated like a grave or respectable character, and kept a wary eye upon the advances of age that should so entitle him. He herded always, while it was possible, with people younger than himself. He did not conform to the march of time, but was dragged along in the procession. His manners lagged behind his years. He was too much of the boy-man. The *toga virilis* never sate gracefully on his shoulders. The impressions of infancy had burnt into him, and he resented the impertinence of manhood. These were weaknesses ; but such as they were, they are a key to explicate some of his writings.

LEIGH HUNT

XXVI. WALKS HOME BY NIGHT

THE readers of these our lucubrations need not be informed that we keep no carriage. The consequence is, that being visitors of the theatre, and having some inconsiderate friends who grow pleasanter and pleasanter till one in the morning, we are great walkers home by night; and this has made us great acquaintances of watchmen, moonlight, *mud-light*, and other accompaniments of that interesting hour. Luckily we are fond of a walk by night. It does not always do us good; but that is not the fault of the hour, but our own, who ought to be stouter; and therefore we extract what good we can out of our necessity, with becoming temper. It is a remarkable thing in nature, and one of the goodnaturedest things we know of her, that the mere fact of looking about us, and being conscious of what is going on, is its own reward, if we do notice it but in good-humour. Nature is a great painter (and art and society are among her works), to whose minutest touches the mere fact of becoming alive is to enrich the stock of our enjoyments.

We confess there are points liable to cavil in a

walk home by night in February. Old umbrellas have their weak sides; and the quantity of mud and rain may surmount the picturesque. Mistaking a soft piece of mud for hard, and so filling your shoe with it, especially at setting out, must be acknowledged to be "aggravating." But then you ought to have boots. There are sights, indeed, in the streets of London, which can be rendered pleasant by no philosophy; things too grave to be talked about in our present paper; but we must premise, that our walk leads us out of town, and through streets and suburbs of by no means the worst description. Even there we may be grieved if we will. The farther the walk into the country, the more tiresome we may choose to find it; and when we take it purely to oblige others, we must allow, as in the case of a friend of ours, that generosity itself on two sick legs may find limits to the notion of virtue being its own reward, and reasonably "curse those comfortable people" who, by the lights in their windows, are getting into their warm beds, and saying to one another, "Bad thing to be out of doors to-night."

Supposing, then, that we are in a reasonable state of health and comfort in other respects, we say that a walk home at night has its merits, if you choose to meet with them. The worst part of it is the setting out; the closing of the door upon the kind faces that part with you. But their words and looks, on the other hand, may set you well off. We have known a word last us all the way home, and a look make a dream of it. To a lover, for instance, no walk can be bad. He sees but one face in the rain:

and darkness ; the same that he saw by the light in the warm room. This ever accompanies him, looking in his eyes ; and if the most pitiable and spoilt face in the world should come between them, startling him with the saddest mockery of love, he would treat it kindly for her sake. But this is a begging of the question. A lover does not walk. He is sensible neither to the pleasures nor pains of walking. He treads on air ; and in the thick of all that seems inclement has an avenue of light and velvet spread for him, like a sovereign prince.

To resume, then, like men of this world. The advantage of a late hour is, that everything is silent and the people fast in their beds. This gives the whole world a tranquil appearance. Inanimate objects are no calmer than passions and cares now seem to be, all laid asleep. The human being is motionless as the house or the tree ; sorrow is suspended ; and you endeavour to think that love only is awake. Let not readers of true delicacy be alarmed, for we mean to touch profanely upon nothing that ought to be sacred ; and as we are for thinking the best on these occasions, it is of the best love we think ; love of no heartless order, and such only as ought to be awake with the stars.

As to cares and curtain-lectures, and such-like abuses of the tranquillity of night, we call to mind, for their sakes, all the sayings of the poets and others about " balmy sleep," and the soothing of hurt minds, and the weariness of sorrow, which drops into forgetfulness. The great majority are certainly " fast as a church " by the time we speak of ; and for the rest,

we are among the workers who have been sleepless for their advantage ; so we take out our licence to forget them for the time being. The only thing that shall remind us of them is the red lamp, shining afar over the apothecary's door ; which, while it does so, reminds us also that there is help for them to be had. I see him now, the pale blinker suppressing the conscious injustice of his anger at being roused by the apprentice, and fumbling himself out of the house, in hoarseness and great-coat, resolved to make the sweetness of the Christmas bill indemnify him for the bitterness of the moment.

But we shall be getting too much into the interior of the houses. By this time the hackney-coaches have all left the stands—a good symptom of their having got their day's money. Crickets are heard, here and there, amidst the embers of some kitchen. A dog follows us. Will nothing make him “go along?” We dodge him in vain ; we run ; we stand and “hish !” at him, accompanying the prohibition with dehortatory gestures, and an imaginary picking up of a stone. We turn again, and there he is vexing our skirts. He even forces us into an angry doubt whether he will not starve, if we do not let him go home with us. Now if we could but lame him without being cruel ; or if we were only an overseer, or a beadle, or a dealer in dog-skin ; or a political economist, to think dogs unnecessary. Oh ! come, he has turned a corner, he has gone ; we think we see him trotting off at a distance, thin and muddy, and our heart misgives us. But it was not our fault ; we were not “hishing” at the time. His departure was lucky, for he had

got our enjoyments into a dilemma ; our " article " would not have known what to do with him. These are the perplexities to which your sympathisers are liable. We resume our way, independent and alone ; for we have no companion this time, except our never-to-be-forgotten and ethereal companion, the reader. A real arm within another's puts us out of the pale of walking that is to be made good. It is good already. A fellow-pedestrian, is company—is the party you have left ; you talk and laugh, and there is no longer anything to be contended with. But alone, and in bad weather, and with a long way to go, here is, something for the temper and spirits to grapple with and turn to account ; and accordingly we are booted and buttoned up, an umbrella over our heads, the rain pelting upon it, and the lamp-light shining in the gutters ; " mudshine," as an artist of our acquaintance used to call it, with a gusto of reprobation. Now, walk cannot well be worse ; and yet it shall be nothing if you meet it heartily. There is a pleasure in overcoming obstacles ; mere action is something ; imagination is more ; and the spinning of the blood, and vivacity of the mental endeavour, act well upon one another, and gradually put you in a state of robust consciousness and triumph. Every time you set down your leg you have a respect for it. The umbrella is held in the hand like a roaring trophy.

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But we approach our home. How still the trees ! How deliciously asleep the country ! How beautifully grim and nocturnal this wooded avenue of ascent against the cold white sky ! The watchmen and

patrols, which the careful citizens have planted in abundance within a mile of their doors, salute us with their "Good mornings;"—not so welcome as we pretend; for we ought not to be out so late; and it is one of the assumptions of these fatherly old fellows to remind us of it. Some fowls, who have made a strange roost in a tree, flutter as we pass them;—another pull up the hill, unyielding; a few strides on a level; and *there* is the light in the window, the eye of the warm soul of the house—*one's* home. How particular, and yet how universal, is that word; and how surely does it deposit every one for himself in his own nest!

XXVII. ITALIAN THIEVES

(From *Thieves Ancient and Modern*)

IN the Italian Novels and the old French Tales are a variety of extremely amusing stories of thieves, all most probably founded on fact. We will give a specimen as we go, by way of making this article the completer. A doctor of laws in Bologna had become rich enough, by scraping money together, to indulge himself in a grand silver cup, which he sent home one day to his wife from the goldsmith's. There were two sharpening fellows prowling about that day for a particular object; and getting scent of the cup, they laid their heads together, to contrive how they might indulge themselves in it instead. One of them accordingly goes to a fishmonger's and buys a fine lamprey, which he takes to the doctor's wife,

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IN the Italian Novels and the old French Tales are a variety of extremely amusing stories of thieves, all most probably founded on fact. We will give a specimen as we go, by way of making this article the completer. A doctor of laws in Bologna had become rich enough, by scraping money together, to indulge himself in a grand silver cup, which he sent home one day to his wife from the goldsmith's. There were two sharpening fellows prowling about that day for a particular object; and getting scent of the cup, they laid their heads together, to contrive how they might indulge themselves in it instead. One of them accordingly goes to a fishmonger's and buys a fine lamprey, which he takes to the doctor's wife,

with her husband's compliments, and he would bring a company of his brother doctors with him to dinner, requesting in the meantime that she would send back the cup by the bearer, as he had forgotten to have his arms engraved upon it. The good lady, happy to obey all these pleasing impulses on the part of master doctor, takes in the fish, and sends out the cup, with equal satisfaction; and sets about getting the dinner ready. The doctor comes home at his usual hour, and finding his dinner so much better than ordinary, asks, with an air of wonder, where was the necessity of going to that expense: upon which the wife, putting on an air of wonder in her turn, and proud of possessing the new cup, asks him where are all those brother doctors whom he said he should bring with him. "What does the fool mean?" said the testy old gentleman. "Mean!" rejoined the wife—"What does *this* mean?" pointing to the fish. The doctor looked down with his old eyes at the lamprey. "God knows," said he, "what it means. I am sure I don't know what it means more than any other fish, except that I shall have to pay a pretty sum for every mouthful you eat of it."—"Why, it was your own doing, husband," said the wife; "and you will remember it, perhaps, when you recollect that the same man that brought me the fish was to take away the cup to have your name engraved upon it." At this the doctor started back, with his eyes as wide open as the fish's, exclaiming, "And you gave it him, did you?"—"To be sure I did," returned the good housewife. The old doctor here began a passionate speech, which he suddenly

broke off; and after stamping up and down the room, and crying out that he was an undone advocate, ran quivering out into the street like one frantic, asking everybody if he had seen a man with a lamprey. The two rogues were walking all this time in the neighbourhood; and seeing the doctor set off in his frantic fit to the goldsmith's, and knowing that he who brought the lamprey had been well disguised, they began to ask one another, in the jollity of their triumph, what need there was for losing a good lamprey, because they had gained a cup. The other, therefore, went to the doctor's house, and putting on a face of good news, told the wife that the cup was found. "Master doctor," said he, "bade me come and tell you that it was but a joke of your old friend. What's-his-name."—"Castellani, I warrant me," said the wife, with a face broad with delight. "The same," returned he;—"Master doctor says that Signor Castellani, and the other gentlemen he spoke of, are waiting for you at the Signor's house, where they purpose to laugh away the choler they so merrily raised, with a good dinner and wine, and to that end they have sent me for the lamprey."—"Take it in God's name," said the good woman; "I am heartily glad to see it go out of the house, and shall follow it myself speedily." So saying, she gave him the fine hot fish, with some sauce, between two dishes; and the knave, who felt already round the corner with glee, slid it under his cloak, and made the best of his way to his companion, who lifted up his hands and eyes at sight of him, and asked twenty questions in a breath, and chuckled, and slapped his

thigh, and snapped his fingers for joy, to think what a pair of fools two rogues had to do with. Little did the poor despairing doctor, on his return home, guess what they were saying of him as he passed the wall of the house in which they were feasting. "Heyday!" cried the wife, smiling all abroad, as she saw him entering, "what, art thou come to fetch me then, bone of my bone? Well; if this isn't the gallantest day I have seen many a year! It puts me in mind—it puts me in mind"—Here the chirping old lady was about to remind the doctor of the days of his youth, holding out her arms and raising her quivering voice, when (we shudder to relate) she received a considerable cuff on the left cheek. "You make me mad," cried the doctor, "with your eternal idiotical nonsense. What do you mean by coming to fetch you, and the gallantest day of your life? May the devil fetch you, and me, and that invisible fiend that stole the cup." "What!" exclaimed the wife, suddenly changing her tone from a vociferous complaint which she had unthinkingly set up, "did you send nobody then for the lamprey?" Here the doctor cast his eyes upon the bercaved table; and unable to bear the shame of this additional loss, however trivial, began tearing his hair and beard, and hopping about the room, giving his wife a new and scandalous epithet at every step, as if he was dancing to a catalogue of her imperfections. The story shook all the shoulders in Bologna for a month after.

We will relate another story from the same Italian novelist that supplied our last. This is a digression;

but it is as well to introduce it, in order to take away a certain bitterness out of the mouth of the other's moral. Our author is Massuccio of Salerno, a novelist, who disputes with Bandello the rank next in popularity to Boccaccio. We have not the original by us, and must be obliged to an English work for the groundwork of our story, as we have been to Paynter's *Palace of Pleasure* for the one just related. But we take the liberty usual with the repeaters of these stories; we retain the incidents, but tell them in our own way, and imagine what might happen in the intervals.

Two Neapolitan sharpers, having robbed a Genoese merchant of his purse, make the best of their way to Sienna, where they arrive during the preaching of St. Bernardin. One of them attends a sermon with an air of conspicuous modesty and devotion, and afterwards waits upon the preacher, and addresses him thus: "Reverend father, you see before you a man, poor indeed, but honest. I do not mean to boast; God knows I have no reason. Who upon earth has reason, unless it be one who will be the last to boast, like yourself, holy father?" Here the saintly orator shook his head. "I do not mean," resumed the stranger, "to speak even of the reverend and illustrious Bernardin, but as of a man among men. For my part, I am, as it were, a creeping thing among them; and yet I am honest. If I have any virtue it is that. I crawl right onward in my path, looking neither to the right nor to the left; and yet I have my temptations. Reverend father, I have found this purse. I will not deny, that being

often in want of the common necessities of life, and having been obliged last night, in particular, to sit down faint at the city gates, for want of my ordinary crust and onion, which I had given to one (God help him) still worse off than myself, I did cast some looks—I did, I say, just open the purse, and cast a wistful eye at one of those shining pieces that lay one over the other inside, with something like a wish that I could procure myself a meal with it, unknown to the lawful proprietor. But my conscience, thank Heaven, prevailed. I have to make two requests to you, reverend father. First, that you will absolve me for this my offence; and second, that you will be pleased to mention in one of your discourses, that a poor sinner from Milan, on his road to hear them, has found a purse, and would willingly restore it to the rightful owner. I would fain give double the contents of it to find him out; but then, what can I do? All the wealth I have consists in my honesty. Be pleased, most illustrious father, to mention this in your discourse, as modestly as becomes my nothingness; and to add especially, that the purse was found on the road from Milan, lying, miraculously as it were, upon a sunny bank, open to the view of all, under an olive-tree, not far from a little fountain, the pleasant noise of which peradventure had invited the owner to sleep." The good father, at hearing this detail, smiled at the anxious sincerity of the poor pilgrim, and, giving him the required absolution, promised to do his utmost to bring forth the proprietor. In his next sermon he accordingly dwelt with such eloquence on the opportunities thrown in the way of

the rich who lose purses to behave nobly, that his congregation several times half rose from their seats out of enthusiasm, and longed for some convenient loss of property that might enable them to show their disinterestedness. At the conclusion of it, however, a man stepped forward, and said, "that anxious as he was to do justice to the finder of the purse, which he knew to be his the moment he saw it (only he was loth to interrupt the reverend father), he had claims upon him at home, in the person of his wife and thirteen children—fourteen, perhaps, he might *now* say—which, to his great sorrow, prevented him from giving the finder more than a quarter of a piece; this, however, he offered him with the less scruple, since he saw the seraphic disposition of the reverend preacher and his congregation, who, he had no doubt, would make ample amends for this involuntary deficiency on the part of a poor family man, the whole portion of whose wife and children might be said to be wrapped up in that purse. His sleep under the olive-tree had been his last for these six nights (here the other man said, with a tremulous joy of acknowledgment, that it was indeed just six nights since he had found it); and Heaven only knew when he should have had another, if his children's bread, so to speak, had not been found again." With these words, the sharper (for such, of course, he was) presented the quarter of a piece to his companion, who made all but a prostration for it; and hastened with the purse out of the church. The other man's circumstances were then inquired into, and as he was found to have almost as many children as

the purse-owner, and no possessions at all, as he said, but his honesty—all his children being equally poor and pious—a considerable subscription was raised for him; so large indeed, that on the appearance of a new claimant next day, the pockets of the good people were found empty. This was no other than the Genoese merchant, who, having turned back on his road when he missed his purse, did not stop till he came to Sienna, and heard the news of the day before. Imagine the feelings of the deceived people! Saint Bernardin was convinced that the two cheats were devils in disguise. The resident canon had thought pretty nearly as much all along, but had held his tongue, and now hoped it would be a lesson to people not to listen to everybody who could talk, especially to the neglect of Saint Antonio's monastery. As to the people themselves, they thought variously. Most of them were mortified at having been cheated; and some swore they never would be cheated again, let appearances be what they might. Others thought that this was a resolution somewhat equivocal, and more convenient than happy. For our parts we think the last were right.

XXVIII. THOUGHTS AND GUESSES ON HUMAN NATURE

CONFUSION OF MODES OF BEING

PEOPLE undertake to settle what ideas they shall have under such and such circumstances of being, when it is nothing but their present state of being, that enables them to have those ideas.

VARIETY. OF THE COLOURS OF PERCEPTION.

There is reason to suppose that our perceptions and sensations are more different than we imagine, even upon the most ordinary things, such as visible objects in general, and the sense of existence. We have enough in common for common intercourse; but the details are dissimilar, as we may perceive in the variety of palates. All people are agreed upon sweet and sour; but one man prefers sour to sweet, and another this and that variety of sour and sweet. "What, then, is the use of attempting to make them agree?" Why, we may try to make them agree upon certain general modes of thinking and means of pleasure—we may colour their existence in the gross, though we must leave the particular shades to come out by themselves. We may enrich their stock of ideas, though we cannot control the items of the expenditure.

CANNOT

"But what if we cannot even do this?" The question is answered by experience. Whole nations and ages have already been altered in their modes of thinking. Even if it were otherwise, the endeavour is itself one of the varieties; one of the modes of opinion and means of pleasure. Besides, CANNOT is the motto neither of knowledge nor humility. There is more of pride and ignorance and despair in it than of the modesty of wisdom. It would settle not only the past but the future: and it would settle the future, merely because the past has not been influenced by those that use it.

Who are these men that measure futurity by the shadow of their own littleness? It is as if the loose stones lying about a foundation were to say, "You can build no higher than your heads."

SUPERSTITION AND DOCTRINE

Superstition attempts to settle everything by assertion; which never did do, and never will. And like all assertors, even well-inclined ones, it shows its feebleness in anger and threatening. It commands us to take its problems for granted, on pain of being tied up to a triangle. Then come its advocates, and assert that this mode of treatment is proper and logical: which is making bad worse. The worst of all is, that this is the way in which the finest doctrines in the world are obstructed. They are like an excellent child, making the Grand Tour with a foolish overbearing tutor. The tutor runs a chance of spoiling the child, and makes their presence disagreeable wherever they go, except to their tradesmen. Let us hope the child has done with his tutor.

SECOND THOUGHT ON THE VARIETY OF THE COLOURS OF PERCEPTION

We may gather from what we read of diseased imaginations how much our perceptions depend upon the modification of our being. We see how personal and inexperienced we are when we determine that such and such ideas must take place under other circumstances, and such and such truths be always indisputable. Pleasure must always be

pleasure, and pain be pain, because these are only names for certain results. But the results themselves will be pleasurable or painful, according to what they act upon. A man in health becomes sickly; he has a fever, is light-headed, is hypochondriacal. His ideas are deranged, or rearrange themselves; and a set of new perceptions, and colourings of his existence, take place, as in a kaleidoscope when we shake it. The conclusion is, that every alteration of our physical particles, or of whatever else we are compounded with, produces a different set of perceptions and sensations. What we call health of body and mind is the fittest state of our composition upon earth: but the state of perception which is sickly to our state of existence may be healthy to another.

DEATH

Of all impositions on the public, the greatest seems to be death. It resembles the threatening faces on each side the Treasury. Or rather, it is a necessary bar to our tendency to move forward. Nature sends us out of her hand with such an impetus towards increase of enjoyment, that something is obliged to be set at the end of the avenue we are in, to moderate our bias and make us enjoy the present being. Death serves to make us think, not of itself, but of what is about us.

CHILDHOOD AND KNOWLEDGE

When children are in good health and temper, they have a sense of existence which seems too exquisite to last. It is made up of clearness of blood.

freshness of perception, and trustingness of heart. We remember the time when the green rails along a set of suburb gardens used to fill us with a series of holiday and rural sensations perfectly intoxicating. According to the state of our health, we have sunny glimpses of this feeling still ; to say nothing of many other pleasures, which have paid us for many pains. The best time to catch them is early in the morning, at sunrise, out in the country. And we will here add, that life never, perhaps, feels such a return of fresh and young feeling upon it as in early rising on a fine morning, whether in country or town. The healthiness of it, the quiet, the conscientiousness of having done a sort of young action (not to add a wise one), and the sense of power it gives you over the coming day, produce a mixture of buoyancy and self-possession, which a sick man must not despair of, because he does not feel it the first morning. But even this reform should be adopted by degrees. The best way to recommend it is to begin with allowing fair-play to the other side of the question. To return to our main point. After childhood comes a knowledge of evil, or a sophisticate and unhealthy mode of life ; or one produces the other, and both are embittered. Everything tells us to get back to a state of childhood—pain, pleasure, imagination, reason, passion, natural affection or piety, the better part of religion. If knowledge is supposed to be incompatible with it, knowledge would sacrifice herself, if necessary, to the same cause, for she also tells us to do so. But as a little knowledge first leads us away from happiness, so a greater knowledge

may be destined to bring us back into a finer region of it.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNHAPPINESS

It is not knowledge that makes us unhappy as we grow up, but the knowledge of unhappiness. Yet as unhappiness existed when we knew it not, it becomes us all to be acquainted with it, that we may all have the chance of bettering the condition of our species. Who would say to himself, "I would be happy, though all my fellow-creatures were miserable!" Knowledge must heal what it wounds, and extend the happiness which it has suspended. It must do by our comfort as a friend may do by one's books—enrich it with its comments. One man grows up and gets unhealthy without knowledge; another, with it. The former suffers and does not know why. He is unhappy, and he sees unhappiness, but he can do nothing for himself or others. The latter suffers and discovers why. He suffers even more because he knows more; but he learns also how to diminish suffering in others. He learns, too, to apply his knowledge to his own case; and he sees, that as he himself suffers from the world's want of knowledge, so the progress of knowledge would take away the world's sufferings and his own. The efforts to this end worry him, perhaps, and make him sickly; upon which, thinking is pronounced to be injurious to health. And it may be so under these circumstances. What then, if it betters the health of the many? But thinking may also teach him how to be healthier. A game of cricket on a green may

do for him what no want of thought would have donè': while on the other hand, if he shows a want of thought upon these points, the inference is easy: he is not so thinking a man as you took him for. Addison should have got on horseback instead of walking up and down a room in his house, with a bottle of wine at each end of it. Shakespeare divided his time between town and country, and in the latter part of his life built, and planted, and petted his daughter Susanna. Solomon in his old age played the Anacreon; and with Milton's leave, "his wisest heart" was not so much out in this matter as when his royal impatience induced him to say that everything was vanity.

CHILDHOOD—OLD AGE—OUR DESTINY

There appears to be something in the composition of humanity like what we have observed in that of music. The musician's first thought is apt to be his finest: he must carry it on, and make a second part to his air: and he becomes inferior. Nature in like manner (if we may speak it without profaneness) appears to succeed best in making childhood and youth. The symphony is a little perturbed; but in what a sprightly manner the air sets off! What purity! What grace! What touching simplicity! Then comes sin, or the notion of it, and "breaks the fair music." Well did a wiser than the "wisest heart" bid us try and continue children. But there are foolish as well as wise children, and it is a special mark of the former, whether little or grown, to affect manhood, and to confound it with

cunning and violence. Do men die, in order that life and its freshness may be as often and as multitudinously renewed as possible? Or do children grow old, that our consciousness may attain to some better mode of being through a rough path? Superstition answers only to perplex us and make us partial. Nature answers nothing. But nature's calm and resolute silence tells us at once to hope for the future, and to do our best to enjoy the present. What if it is the aim of her workmanship to produce self-moving instruments that may carry forward their own good? "A modest thought," you will say. Yet it is more allied to some doctrines celebrated for their humility than you may suppose. Vanity, in speculations earnest and affectionate, is a charge to be made only by vanity. What has it to do with them?

ENDEAVOUR

Either this world (to use the style of Marcus Antoninus) is meant to be what it is, or it is not. If it is not, then our endeavours to render it otherwise are right:—if it is, then we must be as we are, and seek excitement through the same means, and our endeavours are still right. In either case, endeavour is good and useful; but in one of them the want of it must be a mistake.

GOOD AND EVIL

Nature is justified (to speak humanly) in the ordinary state of the world, granting it is never to be made better, because the sum of good, upon the

whole, is greater than that of evil. For in the list of goods we are not only to rank all the more obvious pleasures which we agree to call such, but much that is ranked under the head of mere excitement, taking hope for the ground of it, and action for the means. But we have no right on that account to abstain from endeavouring to better the condition of our species, were it only for the sake of individual suffering. Nature, who is infinite, has a right to act in the gross. Nothing but an infinite suffering should make her stop, were the individual who infinitely suffered the only inhabitant of his hell. Heaven and earth should petition to be abolished, rather than that one such monstrosity should exist: it is the absurdest as well as most impious of all the dreams of fear. To suppose that a Divine Being can sympathise with our happiness is to suppose that he can sympathise with our misery, but to suppose that he can sympathise with misery and yet suffer infinite misery to exist, rather than put an end to misery and happiness together, is to contradict his sympathy with happiness, and to make him prefer a positive evil to a negative one, the existence of torment to the cessation of feeling. As nature, therefore, if considered at all, must be considered as regulated in her operations, though infinite, we must look to fugitive suffering, as nature must guard against permanent; she carves out our work for us in the gross: we must attend to it in the detail. To leave everything to her would be to settle into another mode of existence, or stagnate into death. If it be said that she will take care of us at all events, we answer—

first, that she does not do so in the ordinary details of life, neither earns our food for us, nor washes our bodies, nor writes our books ; secondly, that of things useful-looking and uncertain, she incites us to know the profit and probability ; and thirdly (as we have hinted in a previous observation), that, not knowing how far we may carry on the impulse of improvement towards which she has given us a bias, it becomes us on every ground, both of ignorance and wisdom, to try.

DEGRADING IDEAS OF DEITY

The superstitious, in their contradictory representations of God, call him virtuous and benevolent out of the same passion of fear as induces them to make him such a tyrant. They think they shall be damned if they do not believe him the tyrant he is described ; —they think they shall be damned also if they do not gratuitously ascribe to him the virtues incompatible with damnation. Being so unworthy of praise, they think he will be particularly angry at not being praised. They shudder to think themselves better, and hasten to make amends for it by declaring themselves as worthless as he is worthy.

GREAT DISTINCTION TO BE MADE IN BIGOTS

There are two sorts of religious bigots, the unhealthy and the unfeeling. The fear of the former is mixed with humanity, and they never succeed in thinking themselves favourites of God, but their sense of security is embittered, by aversions which they

dare not own to themselves, and terror for the fate of those who are not so lucky. The unfeeling bigot is a mere unimaginative animal, whose thoughts are confined to the snugness of his kennel, and who would have a good one in the next world as well as in this. He secures a place in heaven as he does in the Manchester coach. Never mind who suffers outside, woman or child. We once found ourselves by accident on board a Margate hoy, which professed to "sail by Divine Providence." Walking about the deck at night to get rid of the chillness which would occasionally visit our devotions to the starry heavens and the sparkling sea, our foot came in contact with something white, which was lying gathered up in a heap. Upon stooping down we found it to be a woman. The Methodists had secured all the beds below, and were not to be disturbed.

SUPERSTITION THE FLATTERER OF REASON

We are far from thinking that reason can settle everything. We no more think so than that our eyesight can see into all existence. But it does not follow that we are to take for granted the extremest contradictions of reason. Why should we? We do not even think well enough of reason to do so. For here is one of the secrets of superstition. It is so angry at reason for not being able to settle everything, that it runs in despair into the arms of irrationality.

GOOD IN THINGS EVIL

"God Almighty !

There is a soul of goodness in things evil,
Would men observingly distil it out !"

So, with equal wisdom and good-nature, does Shakespeare make one of his characters exclaim. Suffering gives strength to sympathy. Hate of the particular may have a foundation in love for the general. The lowest and most wilful vice may plunge deeper, out of a regret of virtue. Even in envy may be discerned something of an instinct of justice, something of a wish to see fairplay, and things on a level.—"But there is still a residuum of evil, of which we should all wish to get rid."—Well, then, let us try.

ARTIFICE OF EXAGGERATED COMPLAINT

Disappointment likes to make out bad to be worse, in order to relieve the gnawing of its actual wound. It would confuse the limits of its pain, and, by extending it too far, try to make itself uncertain how far it reaches

CUSTOM, ITS SELF-RECONCILEMENTS AND
CONTRADICTIONS

Custom is seen more in what we bear than what we enjoy, and yet a pain long borne so fits itself to our shoulders, that we do not miss even that without disquietude. The novelty of the sensation startles us. Montaigne, like our modern beaux, was uneasy when he did not feel himself braced up in his clothing.

Prisoners have been known to wish to go back to their prisons : invalids have missed the accompaniment of a gunshot wound ; and the world is angry with reformers and innovators, not because it is in the right, but because it is accustomed to be in the wrong. This is a good thing, and shows the indestructible tendency of nature to forego its troubles. But then reformers and innovators must arise upon that very ground. To quarrel with them upon a principle of avowed spleen is candid, and has a self-knowledge in it. But to resent them as impertinent or effeminate is at bottom to quarrel with the principle of one's own patience, and to set the fear of moving above the courage of it.

ADVICE

It has been well observed, that advice is not disliked because it is advice, but because so few people know how to give it. Yet there are people vain enough to hate it in proportion to its very agreeableness.

HAPPINESS, HOW WE FOREGO IT

By the same reason for which we call this earth a vale of tears we might call heaven, when we got there, a hill of sighs ; for upon the principle of an endless progression of beatitude, we might find a still better heaven promised us, and this would be enough to make us dissatisfied with the one in possession. Suppose that we have previously existed in the planet Mars ; that there are no fields or trees there ; and that we nevertheless could imagine

them, and were in the habit of anticipating their delight in the next world. Suppose that there was no such thing as a stream of air,—as a wind fanning one's face for a summer's day. What a romantic thing to fancy! What a beatitude to anticipate! Suppose, above all, that there was no such thing as love. Words would be lost in anticipating that. "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard," etc. Yet when we got to this heaven of green fields and fresh airs, we might take little notice of either for want of something more; and even love we might contrive to spoil pretty odiously.

WASHINGTON IRVING

XXIX. ENGLISH WRITERS ON AMERICA

(From *The Sketch Book*)

"Methinks I see in my mind a noble and puissant nation, rousing herself like a strong man after sleep, and shaking her invincible locks; methinks I see her as an eagle, mewing her mighty youth, and kindling her endazzled eyes at the full mid-day beam."—MILTON ON THE LIBERTY OF THE PRESS.

It is with feelings of deep regret that I observe the literary animosity daily growing up between England and America. Great curiosity has been awakened of late with respect to the United States, and the London press has teemed with volumes of travels through the Republic: but they seem intended to diffuse error rather than knowledge: and so successful have they been, that, notwithstanding the constant intercourse between the nations, there is no people concerning whom the great mass of the British public have less pure information, or entertain more numerous prejudices.

English travellers are the best and the worst in the world. Where no motives of pride or interest intervene, none can equal them for profound and philosophical views of society, or faithful and graphical descriptions of external objects; but when either

the interest or reputation of their own country comes in collision with that of another, they go to the opposite extreme, and forget their usual probity and candour, in the indulgence of splenetic remarks, and an illiberal spirit of ridicule.

Hence, their travels are more honest and accurate; the more remote the country described. I would place implicit confidence in an Englishman's description of the regions beyond the cataracts of the Nile; of unknown islands in the Yellow Sea; of the interior of India; or of any other tract which other travellers might be apt to picture out with the illusions of their fancies. But I would cautiously receive his account of his immediate neighbours, and of those nations with which he is in habits of most frequent intercourse. However I might be disposed to trust his probity, I dare not trust his prejudices.

It has also been the peculiar lot of our country to be visited by the worst kind of English travellers. While men of philosophical spirit and cultivated minds have been sent from England to ransack the poles, to penetrate the deserts, and to study the manners and customs of barbarous nations, with which she can have no permanent intercourse of profit or pleasure, it has been left to the broken-down tradesman, the scheming adventurer, the wandering mechanic, the Manchester and Birmingham agent, to be her oracles respecting America. From such sources she is content to receive her information respecting a country in a singular state of moral and physical development—a country in which one of the greatest political experiments in the history of the world is now performing; and

which presents the most profound and momentous studies to the statesman and the philosopher.

That such men should give prejudicial accounts of America is not a matter of surprise. The themes it offers for contemplation are too vast and elevated for their capacities. The national character is yet in a state of fermentation : it may have its frothiness and sediment, but its ingredients are sound and wholesome ; it has already given proofs of powerful and generous qualities ; and the whole promises to settle down into something substantially excellent. But the causes which are operating to strengthen and ennoble it, and its daily indication of admirable properties, are all lost upon these purblind observers ; who are only affected by the little asperities incident to its present situation. They are capable of judging only of the surface of things ; of those matters which come in contact with their private interests and personal gratifications. They miss some of the snug conveniences and petty comforts which belong to an old, highly-finished, and over-populous state of society ; where the ranks of useful labour are crowded, and many earn a painful and servile subsistence by studying the very caprices of appetite and self-indulgence. These minor comforts, however, are all-important in the estimation of narrow minds ; which either do not perceive, or will not acknowledge, that they are more than counter-balanced among us, by great and generally diffused blessings.

They may, perhaps, have been disappointed in some unreasonable expectation of sudden gain. They may have pictured America to themselves as

El Dorado, where gold and silver abounded, and the natives were lacking in sagacity, and where they were to become strangely and suddenly rich, in some unforeseen but easy manner. The same weakness of mind that indulges absurd expectations produces petulance in disappointment. Such persons become embittered against the country on finding that there, as everywhere else, a man must sow before he can reap; must win wealth by industry and talent; and must contend with the common difficulties of nature and the shrewdness of an intelligent and enterprising people.

Perhaps, through mistaken or ill-directed hospitality, or from the prompt disposition to cheer and countenance the stranger prevalent among my countrymen, they may have been treated with unwonted respect in America; and, having been accustomed all their lives to consider themselves below the surface of good society, and brought up in a servile feeling of inferiority, they become arrogant on the common boon of civility; they attribute to the lowliness of others their own elevation; and under-rate a society where there are no artificial distinctions, and where, by any chance, such individuals as themselves can rise to consequence.

One would suppose, however, that information coming from such sources, on a subject where the truth is so desirable, would be received with caution by the censors of the press; that the motives of these men, their veracity, their opportunities of inquiry and observation, and their capacities for judging correctly, would be rigorously scrutinized

before their evidence was admitted, in such sweeping extent, against a kindred nation. The very reverse, however, is the case, and it furnishes a striking instance of human inconsistency. Nothing can surpass the vigilance with which English critics will examine the credibility of the traveller who publishes an account of some distant and comparatively unimportant country. How warily will they compare the measurements of a pyramid, or the descriptions of a ruin? and how sternly will they censure any inaccuracy in these contributions of merely curious knowledge! while they will receive, with eagerness and unhesitating faith, the gross misrepresentations of coarse and obscure writers, concerning a country with which their own is placed in the most important and delicate relations. Nay, they will even make these apocryphal volumes text-books, on which to enlarge, with a zeal and an ability worthy of a more generous cause.

I shall not, however, dwell on this irksome and hackneyed topic; nor should I have adverted to it, but for the undue interest apparently taken in it by my countrymen, and certain injurious effects which I apprehended it might produce upon the national feeling. We attach too much consequence to these attacks. They cannot do us any essential injury. The tissue of misrepresentations attempted to be woven round us are like cobwebs woven round the limbs of an infant giant. Our country continually outgrows them. One falsehood after another falls off of itself. We have but to live on, and every day we live a whole volume of refutation.

All the writers of England united, if we could for a moment suppose their great minds stooping to so unworthy a combination, could not conceal our rapidly-growing importance and matchless prosperity. They could not conceal that these are owing, not merely to physical and local, but also to moral causes—to the political liberty, the general diffusion of knowledge, the prevalence of sound moral and religious principles, which give force and sustained energy to the character of a people, and which, in fact, have been the acknowledged and wonderful supporters of their own national power and glory.

But why are we so exquisitely alive to the aspersions of England? Why do we suffer ourselves to be so affected by the contumely she has endeavoured to cast upon us? It is not in the opinion of England alone that honour lives and reputation has its being. The world at large is the arbiter of a nation's fame: with its thousand eyes it witnesses a nation's deeds, and from their collective testimony is national glory or national disgrace established.

For ourselves, therefore, it is comparatively of but little importance whether England does us justice or not; it is, perhaps, of far more importance to herself. She is instilling anger and resentment into the bosom of a youthful nation, to grow with its growth, and strengthen with its strength. If in America, as some of her writers are labouring to convince her, she is hereafter to find an invidious rival and a gigantic foe, she may thank those very writers for having provoked rivalry and irritated hostility. Every one knows the all-pervading in-

fluence of literature at the present day, and how much the opinions and passions of mankind are under its control. The mere contests of the sword are temporary; their wounds are but in the flesh, and it is the pride of the generous to forgive and forget them: but the slanders of the pen pierce to the heart; they rankle longest in the noblest spirits; they dwell ever present in the mind, and render it morbidly sensitive to the most trifling collision. It is but seldom that any one overt act produces hostilities between two nations; there exists, most commonly, a previous jealousy and ill-will, a predisposition to take offence. Trace these to their cause, and how often will they be found to originate in the mischievous effusions of mercenary writers, who, secure in their closets, and for ignominious bread, concoct and circulate the venom that is to inflame the generous and the brave!

I am not laying too much stress upon this point; for it applies most emphatically to our particular case. Over no nation does the press hold a more absolute control than over the people of America; for the universal education of the poorest classes makes every individual a reader. There is nothing published in England on the subject of our country that does not circulate through every part of it. There is not a calumny dropped from English pen, nor an unworthy sarcasm uttered by an English statesman, that does not go to blight good-will, and add to the mass of latent resentment. Possessing then, as England does, the fountain-head whence the literature of the language flows, how completely is it in her power, and how truly is it her duty, to make it the-

medium of amiable and magnanimous feeling—a stream where the two nations might meet together and drink in peace and kindness. Should she, however, persist in turning it to waters of bitterness, the time may come when she may repent her folly. The present friendship of America may be of but little moment to her; but the future destinies of that country do not admit of a doubt; over those of England there lower some shadows of uncertainty. Should, then, a day of gloom arrive—should those reverses overtake her, from which the proudest empires have not been exempt—she may look back with regret at her infatuation, in repulsing from her side a nation she might have grappled to her bosom, and thus destroying her only chance for real friendship beyond the boundaries of her own dominions.

There is a general impression in England, that the people of the United States are inimical to the parent country. It is one of the errors which have been diligently propagated by designing writers. There is, doubtless, considerable political hostility, and a general soreness at the illiberality of the English press; but, generally speaking, the prepossessions of the people are strongly in favour of England. Indeed, at one time they amounted, in many parts of the Union, to an absurd degree of bigotry. The bare name of Englishman was a passport to the confidence and hospitality of every family, and too often gave a transient currency to the worthless and the ungrateful. Throughout the country there was something of enthusiasm connected with the idea of England. We looked to it with a hallowed feeling of tenderness:

and veneration, as the land of our forefathers—the august repository of the monuments and antiquities of our race—the birthplace and mausoleum of the sages and heroes of our paternal history. After our own country, there was none in whose glory we more delighted—none whose good opinion we were more anxious to possess—none toward which our hearts yearned with such throbbings of warm consanguinity. Even during the late war, whenever there was the least opportunity for kind feelings to spring forth, it was the delight of the generous spirits of our country to show that, in the midst of hostilities, they still kept alive the sparks of future friendship.

Is all this to be at an end? Is this golden band of kindred sympathies, so rare between nations, to be broken forever? Perhaps it is for the best—it may dispel an illusion which might have kept us in mental vassalage; which might have interfered occasionally with our true interests, and prevented the growth of proper national pride. But it is hard to give up the kindred tie! and there are feelings dearer than interest—closer to the heart than pride—that will still make us cast back a look of regret as we wander farther and farther from the paternal roof, and lament the waywardness of the parent that would repel the affections of the child.

Short-sighted and injudicious, however, as the conduct of England may be in this system of aspersion, recrimination on our part would be equally ill-judged. I speak not of a prompt and spirited vindication of our country, nor the keenest castigation of her slanderers—but I allude to a disposition to retaliate,

in kind, to retort sarcasm and inspire prejudice, which seems to be spreading widely among our writers. Let us guard particularly against such a temper; for it would double the evil, instead of redressing the wrong. Nothing is so easy and inviting as the retort of abuse and sarcasm; but it is a paltry and an unprofitable contest. It is the alternative of a morbid mind, fretted into petulance, rather than warmed into indignation. If England is willing to permit the mean jealousies of trade, or the rancorous animosities of politics, to deprave the integrity of her press, and poison the fountain of public opinion, let us beware of her example. She may deem it her interest to diffuse error and engender antipathy, for the purpose of checking emigration: we have no purpose of the kind to serve. Neither have we any spirit of national jealousy to gratify; for as yet, in all our rivalships with England, we are the rising and the gaining party. There can be no end to answer, therefore, but the gratification of resentment—a mere spirit of retaliation—and even that is impotent. Our retorts are never republished in England; they fall short, therefore, of their aim; but they foster a querulous and peevish temper among our writers; they sour the sweet flow of our early literature, and sow thorns and brambles among its blossoms. What is still worse, they circulate through our own country, and, as far as they have effect, excite virulent national prejudices. This last is the evil most especially to be deprecated. Governed, as we are, entirely by public opinion, the utmost care should be taken to preserve the purity of

the public mind. Knowledge is power, and truth is knowledge; whoever, therefore, knowingly propagates a prejudice, wilfully saps the foundation of his country's strength.

The members of a republic, above all other men, should be candid and dispassionate. They are, individually, portions of the sovereign mind and sovereign will, and should be enabled to come to all questions of national concern with calm and unbiassed judgments. From the peculiar nature of our relations with England, we must have more frequent questions of a difficult and delicate character with her, than with any other nation,—questions that affect the most acute and excitable feelings: and as, in the adjustment of these, our national measures must ultimately be determined by popular sentiment, we cannot be too anxiously attentive to purify it from all latent passion or prepossession.

Opening, too, as we do, an asylum for strangers from every portion of the earth, we should receive all with impartiality. It should be our pride to exhibit an example of one nation, at least, destitute of national antipathies, and exercising, not merely the overt acts of hospitality, but those more rare and noble courtesies which spring from liberality of opinion.

What have we to do with national prejudices? They are the inveterate diseases of old countries, contracted in rude and ignorant ages, when nations knew but little of each other, and looked beyond their own boundaries with distrust and hostility. We, on the contrary, have sprung into national

existence in an enlightened and philosophic age, when the different parts of the habitable world, and the various branches of the human family, have been indefatigably studied and made known to each other ; and we forego the advantages of our birth, if we do not shake off the national prejudices, as we would the local superstitions, of the old world.

But above all let us not be influenced by any angry feelings, so far as to shut our eyes to the perception of what is really excellent and amiable in the English character. We are a young people, necessarily an imitative one, and must take our examples and models, in a great degree, from the existing nations of Europe. There is no country more worthy of our study than England. The spirit of her constitution is most analogous to ours. The manners of her people—their intellectual activity, their freedom of opinion, their habits of thinking on those subjects which concern the dearest interests and most sacred charities of private life—are all congenial to the American character ; and, in fact, are all intrinsically excellent : for it is in the moral feeling of the people that the deep foundations of British prosperity are laid ; and however the superstructure may be timeworn or overrun by abuses, there must be something solid in the basis, admirable in the materials, and stable in the structure of an edifice that so long has towered unshaken amidst the tempests of the world.

Let it be the pride of our writers, therefore, discarding all feelings of irritation, and disdaining to retaliate the illiberality of British authors, to speak of the English nation without prejudice, and with

determined candour. While they rebuke the indiscriminating bigotry with which some of our countrymen admire and imitate everything English, merely because it is English, let them frankly point out what is really worthy of approbation. We may thus place England before us as a perpetual volume of reference, wherein are recorded sound deductions from ages of experience; and while we avoid the errors and absurdities which may have crept into the page, we may draw thence golden maxims of practical wisdom, wherewith to strengthen and to embellish our national character.

XXX. RURAL LIFE IN ENGLAND

(From *The Sketch Book*)

Oh! freely to the best pursuits of man,
 Freely to thought, to virtue and to peace,
 Devote life in rural pleasures past!—Cowper.

abodes of elegant and intelligent society, and the country is inhabited almost entirely by boorish peasantry. In England, on the contrary, the metropolis is a mere gathering-place, or general rendezvous, of the polite classes, where they devote a small portion of the year to a hurry of gaiety and dissipation, and, having indulged this kind of carnival, return again to the apparently more congenial habits of rural life. The various orders of society are therefore diffused over the whole surface of the kingdom, and the most retired neighbourhoods afford specimens of the different ranks.

The English, in fact, are strongly gifted with the rural feeling. They possess a quick sensibility to the beauties of nature, and a keen relish for the pleasures and employments of the country. This passion seems inherent in them. Even the inhabitants of cities, born and brought up among brick walls and bustling streets, enter with facility into rural habits, and evince a tact for rural occupation. The merchant has his snug retreat in the vicinity of the metropolis, where he often displays as much pride and zeal in the cultivation of his flower-garden and the maturing of his fruits as he does in the conduct of his business and the success of a commercial enterprise. Even those less fortunate individuals who are doomed to pass their lives in the midst of din and traffic contrive to have something that shall remind them of the green aspect of nature. In the most dark and dingy quarters of the city the drawing-room window resembles frequently a bank of flowers; every spot capable of vegetation

has its grass-plot and flower-bed, and every square its mimic park, laid out with picturesque taste and gleaming with refreshing verdure.

Those who see the Englishman only in town are apt to form an unfavourable opinion of his social character. He is either absorbed in business or distracted by the thousand engagements that dissipate time, thought, and feeling in this huge metropolis. He has, therefore, too commonly, a look of hurry and abstraction. Wherever he happens to be, he is on the point of going somewhere else; at the moment he is talking on one subject his mind is wandering to another; and while paying a friendly visit he is calculating how he shall economize time so as to pay the other visits allotted in the morning. An immense metropolis, like London, is calculated to make men selfish and uninteresting. In their casual and transient meetings they can but deal briefly in commonplaces. They present but the cold superficies of character—its rich and genial qualities have no time to be warmed into a flow.

It is in the country that the Englishman gives scope to his natural feelings. He breaks loose gladly from the cold formalities and negative civilities of town, throws off his habits of shy reserve, and becomes joyous and free-hearted. He manages to collect round him all the conveniences and elegancies of polite life and to banish its restraints. His country-seat abounds with every requisite, either for studious retirement, tasteful gratification, or rural exercise. Books, paintings, music, horses, dogs, and sporting implements of all kinds are at hand. He puts no

constraint either upon his guests or himself, but, in the true spirit of hospitality, provides the means of enjoyment, and leaves every one to partake according to his inclination.

The taste of the English in the cultivation of land, and in what is called landscape gardening, is unrivalled. They have studied Nature intently, and discovered an exquisite sense of her beautiful forms and harmonious combinations. Those charms which, in other countries, she lavishes in wild solitudes are here assembled round the haunts of domestic life. They seem to have caught her coy and furtive graces, and spread them, like witchery, about their rural abodes.

Nothing can be more imposing than the magnificence of English park scenery. Vast lawns that extend like sheets of vivid green, with here and there clumps of gigantic trees, heaping up rich piles of foliage. The solemn pomp of groves and woodland glades, with the deer trooping in silent herds across them; the hare, bounding away to the covert; or the pheasant, suddenly bursting upon the wing. The brook, taught to wind in natural meanderings or expand into a glassy lake; the sequestered pool, reflecting the quivering trees, with the yellow leaf sleeping on its bosom and the trout roaming fearlessly about its limpid waters; while some rustic temple, or sylvan statue, grown green and dank with age, gives an air of classic sanctity to the seclusion.

These are but a few of the features of park scenery; but what most delights me is the creative talent with which the English decorate the unostentatious

abodes of middle life. The rudest habitation, the most unpromising and scanty portion of land, in the hands of an Englishman of taste, becomes a little-paradise. With a nicely discriminating eye, he seizes at once upon its capabilities, and pictures in his mind the future landscape. The sterile spot grows into loveliness under his hand, and yet the operations of art which produce the effect are scarcely to be perceived. The cherishing and training of some trees; the cautious pruning of others; the nice distribution of flowers and plants of tender and graceful foliage; the introduction of a green slope of velvet turf; the partial opening to a peep of blue distance or silver gleam of water;—all these are managed with a delicate tact, a pervading yet quiet assiduity, like the magic touchings with which a painter finishes up a favourite picture.

The residence of people of fortune and refinement in the country has diffused a degree of taste and elegance in rural economy that descends to the lowest class. The very labourer, with his thatched cottage and narrow slip of ground, attends to their embellishment. The trim hedge, the grass-plot before the door, the little flower-bed bordered with snug box, the woodbine trained up against the wall and hanging its blossoms about the lattice, the pot of flowers in the window, the holly providently planted about the house to cheat winter of its dreariness, and to throw in a semblance of green summer to cheer the fireside—all these bespeak the influence of taste flowing down from high sources and pervading the lowest levels of the public mind. If ever Love, as-

poets sing, delights to visit a cottage, it must be the cottage of an English peasant.

The fondness for rural life among the higher classes of the English has had a great and salutary effect upon the national character. I do not know a finer race of men than the English gentlemen. Instead of the softness and effeminaey which characterize the men of rank in most countries, they exhibit a union of elegance and strength, a robustness of frame and freshness of complexion, which I am inclined to attribute to their living so much in the open air, and pursuing so eagerly the invigorating recreations of the country. The hardy exercises produce also a healthful tone of mind and spirits, and a manliness and simplicity of manners, which even the follies and dissipations of the town cannot easily pervert, and can never entirely destroy. In the country, too, the different orders of society seem to approach more freely, to be more disposed to blend and operate favourably upon each other. The distinctions between them do not appear to be so marked and impassable as in the cities. The manner in which property has been distributed into small estates and farms has established a regular gradation from the noblemen, through the classes of gentry, small landed proprietors, and substantial farmers, down to the labouring peasantry, and, while it has thus banded the extremes of society together, has infused into each intermediate rank a spirit of independence. This, it must be confessed, is not so universally the case at present as it was formerly ; the larger estates having, in late years of distress, absorbed the smaller, and, in some

parts of the country, almost annihilated the sturdy race of small farmers. These, however, I believe, are but casual breaks in the general system I have mentioned.

In rural occupation there is nothing mean and debasing. It leads a man forth among scenes of natural grandeur and beauty ; it leaves him to the workings of his own mind, operated upon by the purest and most elevating of external influences. Such a man may be simple and rough, but he cannot be vulgar. The man of refinement, therefore, finds nothing revolting in an intercourse with the lower orders in rural life, as he does when he casually mingles with the lower orders of cities. He lays aside his distance and reserve, and is glad to waive the distinctions of rank, and to enter into the honest, heartfelt enjoyments of common life. Indeed, the very amusements of the country bring men more and more together, and the sounds of hound and horn blend all feelings into harmony. I believe this is one great reason why the nobility and gentry are more popular among the inferior orders in England than they are in any other country, and why the latter have endured so many excessive pressures and extremities, without repining more generally at the unequal distribution of fortune and privilege.

To this mingling of cultivated and rustic society may also be attributed the rural feeling that runs through British literature—the frequent use of illustrations from rural life : those incomparable descriptions of Nature that abound in the British poets, that have continued down from “ The Flower and the

Leaf " of Chaucer, and have brought into our closets all the freshness and fragrance of the dewy landscape. The pastoral writers of other countries appear as if they had paid Nature an occasional visit, and become acquainted with her general charms ; but the British poets have lived and revelled with her—they have wooed her in her most secret haunts—they have watched her minutest caprices. A spray could not tremble in the breeze—a leaf could not rustle to the ground—a diamond drop could not patter in the stream—a fragrance could not exhale from the humble violet, nor a daisy unfold its crimson tints to the morning, but it has been noticed by these impassioned and delicate observers, and wrought up into some beautiful morality.

of sober, well-established principles, of hoary usage and reverend custom. Everything seems to be the growth of ages of regular and peaceful existence. The old church of remote architecture, with its low, massive portal; its Gothic tower; its windows rich with tracery and painted glass, in scrupulous preservation; its stately monuments of warriors and worthies of the olden time, ancestors of the present lords of the soil; its tombstones, recording successive generations of sturdy yeomanry, whose progeny still plough the same fields, and kneel at the same altar; the parsonage, a quaint irregular pile, partly antiquated, but repaired and altered in the tastes of various ages and occupants; the stile and foot-path leading from the church-yard, across pleasant fields, and along shady hedgerows, according to an immemorial right of way; the neighbouring village, with its venerable cottages, its public green sheltered by trees, under which the forefathers of the present race have sported; the antique family mansion, standing apart in some little rural domain, but looking down with a protecting air on the surrounding scene,—all these common features of English landscape evince a calm and settled security, and hereditary transmission of home-bred virtues and local attachments, that speak deeply and touchingly for the moral character of the nation.

It is a pleasing sight, of a Sunday morning, when the bell is sending its sober melody across the quiet fields, to behold the peasantry in their best finery, with ruddy faces and modest cheerfulness, thronging tranquilly along the green lanes to church; but it is still more pleasing to see them in the evenings,

gathering about their cottage doors and appearing to exult in the humble comforts and embellishments which their own hands have spread around them.

It is this sweet home feeling, this settled repose of affection in the domestic scene, that is, after all, the parent of the steadiest virtues and purest enjoyments ; and I cannot close these desultory remarks better than by quoting the words of a modern English poet who has depicted it with remarkable felicity :—

Through each gradation, from the castled hall,
The city dome, the villa crowned with shade,
But chief from modest mansions numberless,
In town or hamlet, shelt'ring middle life,
Down to the cottaged vale, and straw-roof'd shed ;
This western isle hath long been famed for scenes
Where bliss domestic finds a dwelling-place ;
Domestic bliss, that, like a harmless dove
(Honour and sweet endearment keeping guard),
Can centre in a little quiet nest
All that desire would fly for through the earth ;
That can, the world eluding, be itself
A world enjoyed ; that wants no witnesses
But its own sharers, and approving Heaven ;
That, like a flower deep hid in rocky cleft,
Smiles, though 'tis looking only at the sky.

NOTES

NB — These Notes are not intended to save the student from the trouble of using a dictionary for any word with which he may be unfamiliar, nor of thinking out the meaning of a sentence for himself.

He should be warned, however, that the usage of many words and phrases has altered very considerably in the course of time, especially in the case of words derived from Latin. For the scholarly writers of the eighteenth century many words carried practically the literal meaning of the Latin originals, whereas by the nineteenth century their use had been confined to certain special implications. In such cases the Notes do endeavour to supplement smaller modern dictionaries which might not notice such changes of usage. (Examples will be found in Steele's use of "vulgar" and of "impertinence" in Essay I.)

The student should be careful to avoid the charge of pedantry which would be incurred by using such words in their obsolete or archaic sense when writing or speaking English, but it is essential that in reading he should be observant of the meaning which the author himself attached to them.

Again, it will be noticed that on occasions classical authors apparently do not write correct grammar. The student, however, will be well advised not to appeal to their authority in support of any grammatical irregularities in his own composition. They have established a right to take liberties with their material to which he has not yet attained!

Spelling difficulties have been eliminated as far as possible by giving in the text the modern forms.

When any passage in these Essays is obscure merely because of unusual or complex composition of the words or clauses, the student has for the most part been left to work out the meaning for himself. When, however, a knowledge of some fact or allusion is necessary in order to grasp the writer's thought, the material given in the Notes should be enough to make the sentence intelligible in the context. It may be taken for granted that research into

further details would be a digression from the main purpose of this Selection, and probably a waste of time.

For the same reasons the notes on proper names aim at giving only the minimum information necessary to the context. The references given for most of the quotations that occur are admittedly a departure from this principle, but may contribute incidentally to the secondary aim of this Selection, as indicated in the Preface.

Sufficient extraneous information regarding the essayists represented will be found in the Introduction; for the rest, let them speak for themselves.

STEELE

ESSAY PAGE

- I. I. **Rura mihi**, etc.—From the *Georgics*, didactic poems on agricultural subjects by Virgil (B.C. 70-B.C. 19), the most famous poet of the classical period of Roman literature.

The student may safely confine his attention to the translations which accompany this and similar Latin quotations at the heads of essays. They are intended to indicate the dominant thought in each essay, and it will be found helpful to try to put that thought into plain words in each case.

Dryden—a very important English satirist, dramatist, etc., of the latter half of the seventeenth century, who also made a verse translation of Virgil's works, which is still a "classic."

Grecian Coffee-house—see Essay IV. for Coffee-houses in general. In modern times they would correspond partly to the Parisian *café*, partly to the English *club*.

Bills of mortality—technical term for abstracts from the local registers showing statistics of births and deaths in the district. So the expression means: "Your fame has extended beyond the local official records."

Time out of mind—"for a longer time than one can remember."

2. **Out of**—does this mean "from out of" or "outside of"?

Endeavour at—obsolete, modern use being "endeavour to," with verb.

Tom's, Will's, etc.—various coffee-houses.

ESSAY PAGE

- I. 2. Commerce—"intercourse," but now practically only used of trade.

His humour—not in the limited modern sense.
See note on Essay VII. p. 32, "Humourist."

The squire—i.e. Mr. Bickerstaff.

3. Pastoral letter—see dictionary for "pastoral literature." But a "pastoral letter" usually means a circular letter written by a Bishop as the spiritual "pastor" of his "flock," and Steele's apologetic phrase "If I may so call it," indicates a mild play upon words.

The vulgar—N.B.—the word did not carry in the eighteenth century the contemptuous sense that it now has, but merely reflected the literal meaning of the Latin, *vulgus*, "the common people."

Advices—the plural is only found in this now practically obsolete sense, "information," "intelligence."

Impertinence—obsolete sense, "impropriety," something that does not "pertain" to, is not "proper" in, human life.

4. It is remarkable—obsolete literal sense, "it may be remarked."

Taw—a schoolboy's game, played with "marbles," for which see dictionary.

Barbarously used—the schoolboy's point of view, but of course not necessarily the schoolmaster's!

False concords—mistakes in Latin grammar.

Oliver Cromwell—leader of the Parliamentary party which, after a Civil War, deposed and executed King Charles I. in 1649, and set up a Commonwealth or republican form of government. Shortly after Cromwell's death the Monarchy was restored in the person of Charles II., and the body of Cromwell, which had been buried in Westminster Abbey, the burial place of the kings of England, was disinterred and hung on a gallows.

5. The Trumpet in Sheer-Lane—an inn bearing that name and sign.

II.

Aen.:—the *Aeneid*, an epic poem, the most famous of Virgil's works (see note on Essay I. p. 1).

ESSAY PAGE

- II. 5. The vulgar—see note on Essay I. p. 3.

Manés—Latin, "departed spirits."

Such . . . who—modern practice would say "such . . . as" or "those . . . who."

7. Caught—obsolete form.

8. Passages—"what *passed*," or as we should now say, "incidents."

- III. 9. Hor.—Horace, another famous classical Roman poet, contemporary of Virgil and author of *Satires*, *Odes*, etc.

As I have sometimes met—"just as I have met . . . so I have been," etc.

The species—*i.e.* the human species.

10. To be new, to be agreeable—*i.e.* a thing only has to be new in order to be agreeable to such persons.

Jesuit—a member of the "Society of Jesus," a religious organisation which engaged very deeply in political intrigue in order to restore in England the Roman Catholic form of Christianity, which was rejected at the time of the Reformation (middle of the sixteenth century).

Affected—the less usual meaning. "favoured," "shown a preference for."

Thither—whither?

11. The sage—Cicero, the great Roman orator and writer (B.C. 106-42), seems to have been the first "sage" who expressed this now rather commonplace paradox, in one of his moral treatises. Cf. p. 81.

There are so many gratifications (which) attend—a somewhat colloquial omission of the relative pronoun. Cf. below: "You are the first ever asked," where asked is *not* the participle, but the past tense.

Currently—archaic use. "generally," "usually."

By Mr. W.—"by the name of Mr. W."

Remarkable—see note on Essay I. p. 4.

12. Concurrent sentences—sentences that concur with, *i.e.* meet the meaning of, my smiles.

Shaked—obsolete form.

ESSAY PAGE

- III. 12. **Will Honeycomb**—a member of the "Spectator Club," and its expert in social graces and questions of fashion "All his conversation and knowledge has been in the female world . . . That sort of man who is usually called a well-bred fine gentleman To conclude his character, where women are not concerned, he is an honest worthy man." (*Spectator*, No. 2.)
13. **Commerce of discourse**—"interchange of talk."
See note on Essay I p. 2.
14. **Endeavour at**—see note on Essay I. p. 2.
In order to it—"in accordance with that aim," archaic expression.
Upon this occasion—*not* equivalent to the modern use of this expression, which has come to mean little more than "this time"; but in the stricter sense, which "occasion" does still bear, of "opportunity," e.g. "I take this occasion to say"
15. **R**—one of the initials used by Steele to indicate papers contributed to the *Spectator* by himself See end of Essays V. and VI., where Addison indicates *his* authorship by a "C." In spite of many attempted explanations, these initials seem to have been quite arbitrarily chosen.
- IV. **Mart.**—*Martial*, another Roman poet, later and less "classical" than Virgil and Horace, and author of *Epigrams* in verse.
16. **Beaver**—an imaginary name, alluding to the "beavers" or beaver-skin hats which were fashionable at that time, and which would have been sold by a haberdasher in those days, though that trade does not cover such articles now.
- The allies**—England, Holland and other states of Europe, who were at that time engaged in a war with France over the succession to the Spanish throne ("War of the Spanish Succession," 1702-13).
- Inns of court**—the legal societies through which alone students of the law can be "called to the bar" They were originally "inns" or hostels formed in the fourteenth century for the accommodation of such students, but their residential

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character has undergone very considerable modifications in the course of time, and Steele's sketch of the "students of the house" need not be taken to represent the modern aspirants to a legal career!

- iv. 17. **Westminster**—a portion of London, originally a separate city and still retaining its distinct civic status, in which the Houses of Parliament and all the greater Public Offices are situated.

Cause—"case" in ordinary modern English, though legal terminology still retains the old form.

These two sorts of men—viz.: business men and lazy students.

18. **Complexions**—obsolete use, "temperaments," literally their combination of "humours" (see note on Essay VII. p. 32. "Humourist").

Too warm—"too genial" or "sociable." *Mr. Spectator* prefers something between the man who is too keen on business to be interested in private affairs, and the man who is so sociable that he neglects his personal duties. But "too active to be happy" and "too warm to make them neglect" are not parallel constructions, the former phrase meaning as usual "so active that they cannot be happy," while the latter, to suit the context, must mean "so sociable that they make them neglect their personal obligations."

A comma after "warm," though not to be found in the old texts, seems necessary in order to make the sentence clear. That Steele is writing somewhat loosely at the moment is observable from the very next sentence: "*Of these sort of men consist the worthier part.*"

Eubulus—another imaginary name, "Mr. Good-Counsel" (Greek).

19. **Rolling in the public stocks**—an obsolete expression for "speculating on the Stock Exchange."

Are wise in his sentences—"use his sentences to show off their wisdom."

First minister—in plainer language, "head servant."

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20 Lectures—N B—literally "something read."

21 Both ways find their account—"profit in both directions"

Socrates—the noblest of Greek philosophers, born in B C 469 and put to death in B C 399 by his unappreciative fellow-citizens of Athens

Inhabit—now used only transitively.

An hour in every morning—the modern equivalent of this pause for light refreshment would be "five o'clock tea," owing to the considerable changes since the eighteenth century in the hours observed for meals. But the nearest modern equivalent to the *Spectator*, viz the daily newspaper, would be found at the *breakfast table*

Sir Francis Bacon—the great philosopher, essayist and statesman of the reigns of Elizabeth and James I. Born 1561, died 1626

Moses's serpent—the story will be found in the Bible in the book called *Exodus* (chapter vii) :

"The Lord spake unto Moses and unto Aaron, saying, When Pharaoh shall speak unto you, saying, Shew a miracle for you: then thou shalt say unto Aaron, Take thy rod and cast it before Pharaoh, and it shall become a serpent.

And Moses and Aaron went in unto Pharaoh, and they did so as the Lord had commanded: and Aaron cast down his rod before Pharaoh and before his servants, and it became a serpent.

Then Pharaoh also called the wise men and the sorcerers: now the magicians of Egypt, they also did in like manner with their enchantments. For they cast down every man his rod, and they became serpents: but Aaron's rod swallowed up their rods"

22 Muscovy—the old name for Russia, the country of Moscow.

Templars—"lawyers," the *Inner Temple* and *Middle Temple* being two of the "inns of court" (see note on Essay IV. p. 16) established on the site of the old palace of the *Knights of the Temple*.

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a religious military Order which was originally founded in the twelfth century for the protection of pilgrims to Jerusalem, and spread its power and influence all over Europe, but was eventually suppressed on charges of grave corruption.

- V. 23. **Impertinent**—here “irrelevant.” See note on Essay I. p. 3.

Suit—in modern English “set.”

25. “**C**”—see note on Essay III. p. 15.

- VI. **Juv.**—*Juvenal*, Roman poet and satirist, contemporary of *Martial*.

Join'd—note that in eighteenth century pronunciation this rhymes with “find,” but such a pronunciation would now be considered ill-educated.

Tate—a contemporary of Dryden, chiefly famous for his joint authorship in a metrical English version of the Psalms of David.

26. **Coupled like rabbits**—the allusion is obscure.

Return of King Charles the Second—see note on *Oliver Cromwell*, Essay I. p. 4.

Surname—the family name, as distinct from the *Christian name*, or personal name, given at the time of baptism.

The sign of the George—inns always used to notify their names by means of a picture-sign, for the benefit of unlettered travellers, but, with the spread of education and the increase in numbers of the more pretentious “hotels,” the practice, and the type of house itself, are dying out in modern England. This club met at an inn which bore the name and sign of St. George, the “patron saint” of England, on the day dedicated to his memory, 23rd April.

Belief in “patron saints” was a matter of religious conviction when England professed the Roman Catholic creed, but is now chiefly a point of patriotic sentiment. The other patron saints of the British Isles are St. Andrew for Scotland, St. Patrick for Ireland, and St. David for Wales.

27. **Fought his man**—i.e. his own particular enemy. Compare the injunction to a well-trained football or hockey team to “Mark your men.”

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- VI. 28. Men of honour—a sarcastic allusion to the debased conception of "honour" that duelling implies.

From a mutton-pie—rather from a *maker* of mutton-pies, one Christopher Cat.

The October club—named from the "October ale" which its members consumed in large quantities.

29. Speak to him without the door—the presumption being that if she had been put to the trouble of coming to fetch him she would have more to say to her husband than the other members would care to hear!

Non-juror—in 1688 a new Revolution deposed James II., the brother and successor of Charles II. (see note on *Oliver Cromwell*, Essay I. p. 4), and put William III. and Mary on the throne as joint sovereigns. Those who refused to take the oath of allegiance to the new dynasty were called *non-jurors*.

30. *Leges Convivales*—"the Laws of Conviviality," a code of eleven brief rules in Latin.

Ben Jonson—one of the earliest English dramatists (1574-1637) and a friend of Shakespeare. He was a very convivial character, and gathered round him a sort of court of young writers of the period, to whom he dictated their standards of social life, as well as of literary aspiration.

Lipsius—a learned European scholar of the sixteenth century.

Symposium—literally a "drinking-party"; but at the height of classical Greek culture (fifth and fourth centuries B.C.) the wine was only incidental to a feast of wit and brilliant intellectual conversation.

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De Coverley—the French "*de*," meaning "of," in surnames dates from the Norman conquest of England, when family names were largely derived, as in this case, from the places which the family owned. See the butler's letter in Essay VIII., where it is apparent that the name of the village was Coverley.

31. In years—"advanced in years" is the full and more usual expression.

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- VII. 31. **Valet de chambre**—French, "servant of the chamber," i.e. personal servant.

Pad—an easy-paced riding horse.

32. **Obliging conversation**—"conversation" here carries its literal meaning of *intercourse in general*, not the limited application to *interchange of talk* which alone survives in modern use.

Humourist—a person of a distinctive "humour," or, as we should now say, "something of a character."

In ancient physiology there were four chief fluids or *cardinal humours* (see dictionary) of the human body, by the relative proportions of which (their "temperament" or mixing) a person's qualities and disposition were held to be determined. Compare "melancholy," which literally means "black bile." The modern limited use of "humour" well illustrates how the usage of a word is apt to get specialised in course of time.

33. **Insulted with Latin and Greek**—Sir Roger not being a scholar himself, it would be an impertinence for a dependent, such as a chaplain, to show off his learning by classical quotations which his patron did not understand.

Digested—see dictionary.

34. **Who preached to-morrow**—not in person, of course, but from the collection of printed sermons.

Archbishop Tillotson, etc.—eminent theologians and preachers of the preceding century.

Endeavour after—obsolete construction, like "endeavour at" (Essay I. p. 2).

- VIII. 35 **Sensibly**—the less usual meaning, "perceptibly."

Sir Andrew Freeport—a member of the "Spectator Club," "a merchant of great eminence in the city of London. A person of indefatigable industry, strong reason, and great experience." (*Spectator*, No. 2)

Promoting an address—obsolete, "putting forward a petition which he had himself written." See the beginning of the butler's letter.

Whig—"Whigs" and "Tories" were the nicknames given to the two main political parties formed by the dynastic and religious disputes.

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of the latter half of the seventeenth century. Their actual programmes varied with the political situation, but the main distinction between them is roughly indicated by the occasional modern use of the terms to indicate "Liberals" and "Conservatives" respectively.

- VIII 35 Justice of peace—"Justices of the Peace" are honorary magistrates appointed by Royal Commission to attend to the peace of the county in which they live

Captain Sentry—another member of the "Spectator Club," nephew and heir to Sir Roger—"a gentleman of great courage, good understanding, but invincible modesty" (*Spectator*, No. 2.)

- 36 Stomach—still sometimes used as equivalent to "appetite"

- 37 Peremptorily—"positively," "definitely," but now only used in connection with commands.

The quorum—the local board of Justices of the Peace, of whom (Latin *quorum*) a certain number have to be present before business can be done.

- 33 The Act of Uniformity—*i.e.* in matters of religion, passed in 1662, penalising the civil status of all who would not conform to the established usages of the reformed Church of England. Hence the terms "Nonconformist" and "Dissenter." Full religious freedom was not granted in England till the nineteenth century.

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- IX. 33 Ovid—another famous Roman poet, contemporary and friend of Horace. His translator, Elphinstone, is of no literary importance

Seneca—Roman philosopher of the first century A.D., and tutor to the tyrannical emperor, Nero

- X 45 Sallust—Roman historian of the first century B.C.
Socrates—see note on Essay V. p. 21.

- 46 Concur to—obsolete use, "contribute to," literally "run together to."

Communicated—obsolete use, "shared," "enjoyed in common."

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- X. 46. **Officiousness**—"dutifulness," but in modern usage confined to an *extracagant* exhibition of that quality.
47. **Exhaled**—obsolete in this sense of "*completely evaporated*."
48. **Derives from one . . . from the other**—from which, respectively? Note Johnson's fondness for antithesis, in this case in inverse form.
50. **Horace**—see note on Essay III. p. 9.
51. **Gratulation**—obsolete, "*gratification*."
- XI. **Punctuality**—N.B.—the word, for Johnson, means scrupulous observance of small obligations in *all* matters, not only in matters of time, to which modern use confines it.
- Stepney**—of no literary importance.
- Boyle**—Robert Boyle, famous scientist and theologian of the seventeenth century.
- Communications**—see note on "*communicated*," Essay X p. 46.
52. **Cujacius**—a French jurist of the sixteenth century.
53. **Vulgar**—see note on Essay I. p. 3.
54. **Aliger**—Latin, "*winged*"; an imaginary name, of course
- Varieties of conversation**—see note on Essay VII. p. 32
- Officiousness**—see note on Essay X. p. 46.
- 55 **When the settlements were drawn**—"when the legal documents regarding the dowry were drawn up for signature."
56. **Formed an interest in a borough**—*i.e.* as its prospective Member of Parliament.
- XII. 59. **Forbear any mischief**—this verb is rarely transitive in modern English.
- The ancient sage who thought a great book a great evil**—curiously enough no writer appears to have preserved his name!

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- XIII. 61. **The Man in Black**—see Introduction, p. xii.
- Lien Chi Altangi**—the Citizen of the World.
- Humourist**—see note on Essay VII. p. 32.

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- XVIII. 81. "The fields his study"—*i.e.* "*were* his study." To have the singular verb expressed, and the plural implied, in sentences coupled like this, is awkward and unusual; the reverse, of course, is common.

The quotation is from "The Farmer's Boy," a poem by which Robert Bloomfield (1766-1823), a shoemaker by trade, obtained considerable fame in his time.

Watering-places—originally places where people went to take medicinal waters from local springs, but now generally used of sea-side holiday resorts.

Elbow-room—a colloquial expression.

"A friend in my retreat," etc.—from "Retirement," by William Cowper, the well-known eighteenth century poet.

82. "May plume her feathers," etc.—from "Comus," by John Milton, the great English poet of the seventeenth century.

"Resort"—abstract and poetical for "assemblies of men"

Tilbury—a light kind of carriage; not used nowadays.

Good things—*i.e.* "good stories."

Impertinence—see note on Essay I. p. 3.

"Sunken wrack," etc.—Shakespeare, *Henry V.* Act I. Sc. 2.

"And make your chronicle as rich with praise.

As is the ooze and bottom of the sea.

With sunken wrack [*i.e.* wrecks] and sumless treasures."

83. "Very stuff o' the conscience"—Shakespeare, *Othello*, Act I. Sc. 2—"A very element of my inmost being"

"Out upon such half-faced fellowship"—Shakespeare, *Henry IV.* (Part I.), Act I. Sc. 3. "Out upon"="away with!"

Mr. Cobbett—William Cobbett, political and miscellaneous writer of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, best known, perhaps, for his *Rural Rides* and *Advice to Young Men*.

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XVIII 83 Sterne—Laurence Sterne, eighteenth century divine and novelist, chiefly famous for *Tristram Shandy* and the *Sentimental Journey*.

85 "Give it an understanding," etc.—Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, Act I Sc. 2.

Coleridge—Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772-1834), the famous poet and philosopher, author of *The Ancient Mariner*, and friend of Wordsworth.

Pindaric ode—Pindar was a famous Greek poet of the fifth century B.C., the style of whose odes was imitated frequently by the English poets of the seventeenth and eighteenth century. *Alexander's Feast*, by Dryden, is considered the best example in English.

"He talked far above singing"—from *Philaster* (Act V. Sc. 5), a play by Francis Beaumont and John Fletcher, joint authors of many plays about the same time as Shakespeare (end of sixteenth and beginning of seventeenth centuries)

All-Foxden—in Somersetshire, near Nether Stowey, where Coleridge and Wordsworth resided as close neighbours for a few years.

86. "Beyond Hyde Park," etc.—from *The Man of Mode*, or *Sir Fopling Flutter*, by Sir George Etherege, a seventeenth century dramatist. Hyde Park is one of the chief open-air resorts of fashionable society in London.

87. Stonehenge—a pre-historic temple, connected with the worship of the sun and consisting of a circle of gigantic stones, situated on *Salisbury Plain*, a large tract of more or less wild and undeveloped country in the South of England.

88. "The mind is its own place"—"and in itself Can make a Heaven of Hell, a Hell of Heaven."

Milton, *Paradise Lost*, l. 254.

Eclat—French, "brilliance," "distinction."

"With glistening spires," etc.—Milton, *Paradise Lost*, III. 550

Bodleian—a famous library at Oxford, founded by Sir Thomas Bodley in the seventeenth century

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- XVIII. 88. **Blenheim**—the palatial residence of the Dukes of Marlborough at Woodstock, near Oxford; presented to the first Duke by the English Parliament in recognition of his great victory at Blenheim in Bavaria, 1704.
- Powdered**—the eighteenth century fashion of wearing the hair (or a wig) long and powdered was retained for noblemen's servants long after their masters had abandoned the practice.
89. **The Bourbons**—the French Royal dynasty, who had "learnt nothing and forgotten nothing" when their rule was restored after Napoleon's downfall in 1815.
- "**Jump**"—"skip" (*i.e.* cut out, omit), would be the more usual modern colloquialism.
90. **The poet**—not traced. In saying "somewhat quaintly," Hazlitt may perhaps be thinking of the more usual view originally voiced by Horace: "They change their skies but not their minds who sail across the sea."
- XIX. 91. **You will bring with you from your books**—the article from which this extract is taken is entitled "Advice to a Schoolboy."
92. **Ethical Charts**—diagrams used to assist the study of Ethics.
- "**Practique part of life**"—*i.e.* *practical* part. Shakespeare, *Henry V.*, Act I. Sc. 1.
- "**Retreat of the Ten Thousand**"—a famous description by the Greek historian, Xenophon, of how he successfully conducted the retirement of a force of Greek mercenaries from the Euphrates, where the Persian prince who had employed them was killed in battle, through modern Armenia and Asia Minor, back to the Greek settlements on the southern shores of the Black Sea, in 401 B.C.
93. **Bon-mots**—French. "smart sayings."
95. **Consequence**—in the sense of "importance."
- XX. 97. **Which he who does not admire**—a rather awkward example of the relative pronoun constructionally belonging only to a subordinate clause of the sentence which it introduces.

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97. Honourable Member . Noble Lord—the terms by which etiquette demands that fellow-members shall be referred to in the House of Commons and the House of Lords respectively.

Ring the changes—"repeating the same thing in a different way" The allusion is to ringing a peal of bells.

98. Looking for causes in the dark—philosophy has been described pessimistically as "a blind man looking in a dark room for a black cat which isn't there"

Fellow—somewhat colloquial

Beat my man—i.e. my opponent. See note on Essay VI. p. 27, "Fought his man"

99. Peter Pindar—the *roni de plume* under which Dr. Wolcot (end of eighteenth century) wrote his satirical poems. They have now lost their interest, owing to the topical and personal nature of their subjects

Mr. Opie—not a well-known name now in British art
Sir Joshua Reynolds (1723-1792), the first President of the Royal Academy, and still considered by many the greatest English portrait painter. A personal friend of Dr. Johnson

100. Goldsmith's pedagogue—i.e. his description of the schoolmaster in his famous poem, "The Deserted Village"

101. The tact of style—"tact" is apparently here used in its literal sense of "touch" Words do not always cut when badly handled, but knives do

The Juggernaut—a European tradition dating back to the fourteenth century regarding the festival of Jagannath at Puri, under whose processional car devotees are supposed to have thrown themselves in order to acquire merit by such a death

Gaudy-day—literally a "day of rejoicing." This use of the word is now practically confined to the annual dinner of a college or other ancient foundation.

102. Locksley in "Ivanhoe"—Sir Walter Scott's novel, ch. xiii.:

"'You have not allowed for the wind, Hubert,' said his antagonist, bending his bow, 'or that

had been a better shot.' So saying, and without showing the least anxiety to pause upon his aim, Locksley stepped to the appointed station, and shot his arrow as carelessly in appearance as if he had not even looked at the mark. . . . Yet it alighted in the target two inches nearer to the white spot."

XX. 102. "Human face divine"—Milton, *Paradise Lost*, III. 44.

103. Tumbler—"acrobat."

Haydons and H—s—Hazlitt means to imply that the painters of his own day (such as Benjamin Haydon, an historical painter of no great note) were too mechanical to be called true artists.

Blandness of gusto—"the soothing quality of his artistic style." *Gusto* (Italian) is here used in a technical artistic sense, and not in the more common meaning of "taste" or "relish."

"In tones or gestures hit"—i.e. "achieved." Milton, *Paradise Regained*, IV. 255. But "gestares" is substituted for the original "numbers" (notes of music) in order to suit the context.

XXI. 104. "The body of this death"—St. Paul's *Epistle to the Romans*, ch. vii. ver. 24.

"Cooped and cabined in"—Shakespeare, *Macbeth*, Act III. Sc. 4. "I am cabin'd, crib'd, confin'd, bound in."

"Peep through the blanket of the dark"—Shakespeare, *Macbeth*, Act I. Sc. 5.

105. "A consummation devoutly to be wished"—Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, Act III. Sc. 1.

"Hoc erat in votis"—Latin, "This was the extent of my prayers." Horace, *Satires*, II. vi. 1.

106. Ghostly—archaic for "spiritual."

"The hermit poor"—quoted in Lamb's *John Woodvil*, Act V.

"Vows made in pain," etc.—Milton, *Paradise Lost*, IV. 97.

"The devil was sick," etc.—an old proverb, first found quoted by Rabelais, the famous French wit and satirist of the sixteenth century. "The devil a monk was he" is a play upon words.

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the colloquial expression "(the) devil a," expressing strong negation, e.g. "(the) devil a bit," "(the) devil a penny," i.e. "not one bit," "not one penny."

XXI. 107 "Like life and death in disproportion met"—Lamb, *John Woodvil*, Act II.

"Trouble deaf Heaven with our bootless prayers"—Shakespeare, *Sonnet XXIX.*; but "prayers" should be "cries."

"Moralize our complaints," etc.—"draw moral lessons from our condition by comparing it to numberless things." Cf. Shakespeare, *As You Like It*, Act II. Sc. 1.

"Duke But what said Jacques?"

Did he not moralize this spectacle?"

Lord O, yes, into a thousand similes."

In toto—Latin, 'altogether.'

103 De jure and de facto—Latin, "by right and in actual fact."

"They have drugged my posset with"—Shakespeare, *Macbeth*, Act II. Sc. 2.

The clouds disappear—i.e. the nice white fleecy ones, my weak imagination can only conjure up a completely overcast sky.

109 "Like Samson his green wythes"—from *The Task*, by William Cowper (cf. p. 81).

Samson was a famous Jewish hero, noted for his great strength, at the time when the Jews were establishing themselves in Palestine. His mistress, Delilah, endeavoured to elicit the secret of his great strength (which really lay in his uncut hair), in order to deliver him treacherously to his enemies, the Philistines:

"And Samson said unto her, If they bind me with seven green wythes (wythes), that were never dried, then shall I be weak, and be as another man."

Then the lords of the Philistines brought up to her seven green wythes which had not been dried, and she bound him with them. Now there were men lying in wait, abiding with her in the chamber. And she said unto him, The Philistines be upon thee, Samson. And he brake the

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withs, as a thread of tow is broken when it toucheth the fire. So his strength was not known."

The full story will be found in the Bible, in the book called *Judges*, ch. xvi.

XXI. 110. **Metastasio**—an Italian poet of the eighteenth century.

"A world both pure and good"—Wordsworth's Sonnets on *Personal Talk*, III.

III. **Pro tempore**—Latin, "for the time being," "temporarily."

"The History of a Foundling"—*The History of Tom Jones, a Foundling*, the masterpiece of Henry Fielding, a famous novelist of the eighteenth century.

"The Fairy Queen"—the great poem of the famous Elizabethan poet, Edmund Spenser (1552-99).

"A foregone conclusion"—Shakespeare, *Othello*, Act III. Sc. 3.

Last sands running out—the metaphor is from an *hour-glass*, "a glass filled with sand, which, running through a narrow hole, marks the time" (Dr. Johnson).

112. "We see the children," etc.—from Wordsworth's famous *Ode on Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood*.

A cricket chirps on the hearth—in the cold climate of England the insect in question seeks the warmth of the fireplace, which is heaped high (with "Yule-logs") at Christmas-time to give a cheerful blaze. Hence the association of ideas. A cricket's chirp in India would bring up less pleasant recollections of hot-weather nights.

After being stifled—loose writing. Was the *rose* stifled?

Bed-rid—the usual prose form is now *bed-ridden*, the participle being from "to ride," not "to rid."

"Journey to Lisbon"—by Henry Fielding, eighteenth century novelist.

"**Decameron**"—a series of tales by the fourteenth-century Italian "novelist," Boccaccio.

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XXI. 112. "Paul Clifford"—by Bulwer Lytton (Lord Lytton), author of a large number of well-known novels during the middle of the nineteenth century. The hero, Paul Clifford, is a highwayman, whose character is changed and elevated by the influence of love.

At a loss—"puzzled," "at a loss," the metaphor from hounds trying to follow a scent.

112. 113. "audible and full of vent"—Shakespeare, *Coriolanus*, Act IV. Sc. 5:

Let me have war, say I; it exceeds peace as far as day does night; it's sprightly, waking, audible, and full of vent." *Vent* here="outlets of action."

The *Beggar's Opera*"—in which John Gay (1693-1732) caricatured Italian Opera by substituting highwaymen, etc., for the conventional heroes of character in such works.

112. 114. *True Admission*—see beginning of this Essay.

The true pathos and sublime"—from *An Epistle to Dr. Blacklock* by Robert Burns (1759-96), the great national poet of Scotland.

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XXII. 114. Rise with the lark—which is supposed to soar into the sky at daybreak in order to greet the rising sun with its song.

We are not naturalist enough—the "editorial *we*."

115. Persic—an allusion to the sun-worship in the early Persian religion.

In his image—i.e. as represented by Sleep.

116. That Imperial forgetter of his dreams—Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon, who commanded his wise men, on pain of death, not merely to interpret a certain dream, but to tell him first what it was, as he had forgotten it. See the Bible, the book of *Daniel*, ch. ii.

To import us—"to be important to us."

Shaken hands with—i.e. in farewell.

The fourth act—traditionally there should be five acts in a play, so there is only one act left of Life's drama.

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XXII. 117. **Given the hand of half-way approach**—"stretched out a hand to greet it as it comes."

118. **A Caius or a Titius**—common Roman names in classical times.

Depress—in the "economic" sense, to "depreciate."

Profane—archaic, in the literal sense of the Latin, "before (outside) the temple," *i.e.* "the uninitiated."

That mysterious book in the Apocalypse—see ch. x. of the *Book of Revelation* (Greek *Apokalypsis*) at the end of the Bible, where the prophet is bidden in a vision to take a little book from the hand of an angel and eat it: "And I took the little book out of the angel's hand, and ate it up; and it was in my mouth sweet as honey: and as soon as I had eaten it, my belly was bitter."

120. **Reversions**—legal term, see dictionary. Here amounts to "the benefits you can claim."

Fled from the earth—participle, not past tense.

Arabian Stony—poetic and archaic for "Arabian Desert," proverbial for its desolation.

121. **Convictive**—archaic, "convincing."

Something else—Lamb keeps up the affectation of sulkiness and will not explicitly suggest that it was *kindness* that prevented them from confessing "to the secret," *i.e.* that they knew why he was embarrassed.

The noble patient in Argos—the story is told in one of Horace's poetic *Epistles*.

"**Qui se credebat**," etc.—"Who believed he was listening to wondrous Tragedies, while he sat and applauded in an empty theatre."

"**Pol, me occidistis**," etc.—"By Pollux, my friends, you have slain, not saved me, says he, when my delight has thus been torn from me, and a most pleasing delusion of the mind taken forcibly away."

XXIII. 122. **Dorimant**—a witty aristocratic libertine in Etherege's *Man of Mode*. See note on Essay XVIII. p. 86.

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XXIII. 122. Fish-wife—a woman who sells fish, in London usually of the poorest class and traditionally coarse of speech.

The kennel—"street-gutter."

Traveller for some rich tradesman—i.e. travelling agent, "commercial traveller."

Box-coat—a heavy overcoat for wear when riding on the box or driving-seat of a travelling-coach.

123 Warehouseman—the author of such a remark is assumed to be a "tradesman" of some sort.

Lothbury—a district in "The City," i.e. the business part of London.

Find their account—compare Essay V. p. 21.

124 Presbyterian—a section of the Christian Church which differs from the Church of England on questions of ecclesiastical government. As being therefore a Dissenter (see note on Essay VIII. p. 38, "Act of Uniformity") and also a mere "merchant," Paice would not have been recognised in the "polite society" of Lamb's day.

Casualties—"accidental circumstances," archaic.

Bareheaded—smile if you please—implying that only the shallow-minded would smile at the idea of lifting one's hat to a mere servant-girl. In modern practice the hat is usually only taken off and *kept* off out of doors in the presence of Royalty.

Nay, smile not—not even the shallow-minded can be permitted to regard *this* as laughable.

125 Eld—archaic, "old age."

Yield the wall—a gentleman should always take the outside of a footpath

Can afford to show—"can take the trouble to show."

Pieux Chevalier—French, "valiant knight."

Sir Calidore—a knight, the type of courtesy, in Spenser's *Fairy Queen* (see note on Essay XXI. p. 111).

Sir Tristan, or Tristram—another famous knight in the legends of the "Age of Chivalry."

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XXIII. 126. To forward them—"to hasten their completion," rare use.

Discovered—"revealed," somewhat archaic.

127. Additaments—archaic for "additions."

XXIV. 128. Mare Clausum—Latin, "a sea shut up" against the commerce of the world at large; the political antithesis of the "Freedom of the Seas."

Two Tables of the Law—the code delivered to the Jews by their great law-giver Moses, who received it in the form of two tables of stone, engraved by the hand of God Himself. See the Bible, the Book of *Exodus*, ch. xxxi. 18.

129. Honing—"grumbling," practically obsolete except in this phrase.

His bowels are melted—*i.e.* "he is moved with compassion," an archaic expression, based on ancient ideas of physiology.

130. Discipline of—"education in."

Conceit—literal sense, "conception," archaic.

Douceur—French, "a gratuity," generally used now of a *bribe*, but here a fee in the form of a bank-note.

131. Inquiries are making—somewhat archaic for "being made."

Slapping of doors—"slamming" in modern English.

132. Lernean . . . Philoctetes—Philoctétés was a character in classical Greek legend who pricked his foot accidentally with an arrow that had been dipped in the gall of the Lernean Hydra (a many-headed monster which inhabited the Lernean marsh, and was killed by Hercules), and suffered therefrom incurable and excruciating agony for many years.

133. In Articulo Mortis—"in the very moment of death," Latin.

Something hard—"somewhat forced." "

Flatus—"inflation," a medical term.

Tityus—a giant in ancient Greek mythology, whose body was so vast that it covered nine acres of ground, and who was punished for an insult to the gods by having two vultures kept feeding upon his liver, which was made to grow again continually.

ESSAY PAGE

XXV. 133. This poor gentleman—"Elia" is of course Lamb himself, who gives us much valuable self-revelation in this essay.

134. Unlicked—the metaphor appears to be from a dog and its puppies, or from a cat washing itself. Compare the colloquial expression, "to lick into shape."

Incondite—"ill-composed."

Villanously pranked—itsself an "antique mode or phrase," meaning "badly dressed up."

A country boy—this was actually S. A. Coleridge (see note on Essay XVIII. p. 85), who was a schoolfellow of Lamb's at Christ's Hospital, a famous London school.

135. E'en—"even," usually found only in poetic diction

Your long talkers—the *generic* use of the pronoun.

Petit—French, "small."

136. Literati—Latin, "men of letters."

They were, for the most part—*i.e.* the companions whom he chose were.

Intimados—Spanish, "intimates."

The weed—continuing the metaphor from "floating on the surface."

The Indian weed—tobacco, originally obtained from the *Red Indians* of North America in the sixteenth century.

Marry—an archaic oath, "By Mary," *i.e.* the Virgin Mary, mother of Jesus of Nazareth.

Statist—"statesman."

137. "Visiting governor"—*i.e.* a member of the governing body of the local school.

Carried to a foible—"developed into an actual weakness."

Toga virilis—Latin, "the garb of manhood."

Impertinence—see note on Essay I. p. 3.

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ESSAY PAGE

XXVI. 138. Mud-light—see later, p. 142.

139. "Curse those comfortable people"—apparently the sentiments expressed by the "friend of ours."

140. Curtain-lectures—"a reproof given by a wife to her husband in bed" (Dr. Johnson)—the old-fashioned English bed being usually surrounded with curtains.

"Fast as a church"—*i.e.* "as fast asleep as a church," proverbial expression, but the ground of comparison is obscure.141. The pale blinker—*i.e.* the apothecary, pale and blinking"Go along"—*i.e.* "be off," the command addressed vainly to the animal.Our "article"—*i.e.* the literary article we were mentally composing as we walked.142. Your sympathisers—*generic* use of the pronoun, "people who are too sympathetic."Out of the pale of—"outside the scope of." "The pale" historically was the district *paled* or *palisaded* off for the first English colonists in Ireland."Mudshine"—compare "*mud-light*" at the beginning of the essay.

Gusto of reprobation—see note on Essay XX. p. 103. "blandness of gusto"; paraphrase, "in a style of artistic disapproval."

XXVII. 143. Italian Novels—tales such as those in Boccaccio's *Decameron* (see note on Essay XXI. p. 112), not the modern literary type.145. Round the corner—*i.e.* safely out of the way.

Shook all the shoulders—with laughter.

147. Neapolitan—of Naples.

XXVIII. 152. Which never did do—"do" in the sense of "*suffice*," "succeed," as in the phrase "That will do."Tied up to a triangle—*i.e.* given a flogging, the triangle being the framework to which the offender is tied.

ESSAY PAGE

XXVIII. 152. **The Grand Tour**—through France, Switzerland, Italy, and home by Germany. The usual finish of a young English aristocrat's education in the days before railways.

153. **On each side the Treasury**—the allusion is obscure, but appears to refer to figures on the front of the building in which the Treasury Offices were then situated.

154. **We remember the time**—the "editorial *we*."

Sophisticate—adjective: the participle, "sophisticated," is more usual.

156. **Anacreon**—a Greek poet of the sixth and fifth centuries B.C., who wrote chiefly in praise of love and wine

Solomon—*Suleiman bin Daoud*, the famous King of the Jews, who was "wiser than all men" (see the Bible, the *First Book of the Kings*, ch. iv. 29, and the *Second Book of the Chronicles*, ch. i.). But by the end of his reign "he had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines; and his wives turned away his heart" (1 *Kings*, xi. 3).

With Milton's leave—"in spite of what Milton has written."

Everything was vanity—see the Bible, the book of *Ecclesiastes* or *The Preacher*, ch. i. verses 1 and 2:

"The words of the Preacher, the son of David, King of Jerusalem. Vanity of vanities, saith the Preacher, vanity of vanities; all is vanity."

A wiser than the "wisest heart"—*The Gospel according to St. Matthew*, ch. xviii. verses 2 and 3:

"Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them, and said, Verily I say unto you, except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven."

157. **Marcus Antoninus**—better known as *Marcus Aurelius Antoninus*, a Roman emperor of the second century A.D., famous for his piety and for his *Meditations*, a record of his moral and religious sentiments and opinions, set down in detached notes such as this.

ESSAY PAGE

- XXVIII. 160. **Margate**—a watering-place on the coast of Kent.
- Hoy**—a small coasting-vessel: a nautical term, not in common use.
- Methodists**—a sect of Nonconformists (see note on Essay VIII. p. 38, "Act of Uniformity"). The reproach is, of course, levelled not at the sect, but at persons who talk much about "Divine Providence," and neglect their duty to their fellow-men.
161. "There is a soul of goodness in things evil"—Shakespeare, *Henry V.*, Act IV. Sc. 1.
- Montaigne**—a famous French essayist and aristocrat of the sixteenth century.
- Like our modern beaux**—an allusion to an effeminate fashion among such persons of wearing "stays" or corsets.
163. "Eye hath not seen," etc.—see the Bible, St. Paul's *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, ch. ii. v. 9 :
"Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him."

IRVING

- XXIX. 164. **Mewing**—an archaic word meaning "to moult"
"Peculiarly used by Milton. The precise sense intended is difficult to determine: perhaps 'to renew by the process of moulting'; some would render 'exchanging her mighty youth for the still mightier strength of full age.'" (*The Oxford New English Dictionary*.)
165. **Performing**—compare "enquiries are making," Essay XXIV. p. 131.
167. **El Dorado**—"The Golden (Land)," a legendary discovery of the first Spanish explorers in America, never afterwards located.
- Censors**—"critics"; Irving does not mean an official censorship.
172. **The late war**—between Great Britain and the United States, 1812-15.

NOTE PAGE

XXX 175. Rural Life in England—It must be borne in mind that this was written a hundred years ago: it still remains true to a large extent, however, in spite of the 'march of civilisation'

"Domestic life in rural pleasures past"—"passed" is the more usual and less ambiguous form.

Cowper—see note on Essay XVIII p 81: "A friend in my retreat"

170 Rustic temple or sylvan statue—it was the fashion in the eighteenth century to imitate the artistic, as well as the literary, styles of "classical" Greece and Rome

182 Cannot be vulgar—contrast Steele's use of this word Essay I p 3

Sounds of hound and horn—in fox-hunting

183 Chaucer—the "Father of English Poetry," fourteenth century

185 A modern English poet—the Reverend Rann Kennedy (1772-1851), schoolmaster and poet, and a personal friend of Irving, Coleridge, and Wordsworth. His fame, however, has not survived.

"Middle life"—i.e. "the middle classes."

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